OCTOBER 1952

COMMENTARY

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

David Riesman — Charles Abrams — Irving Kristol

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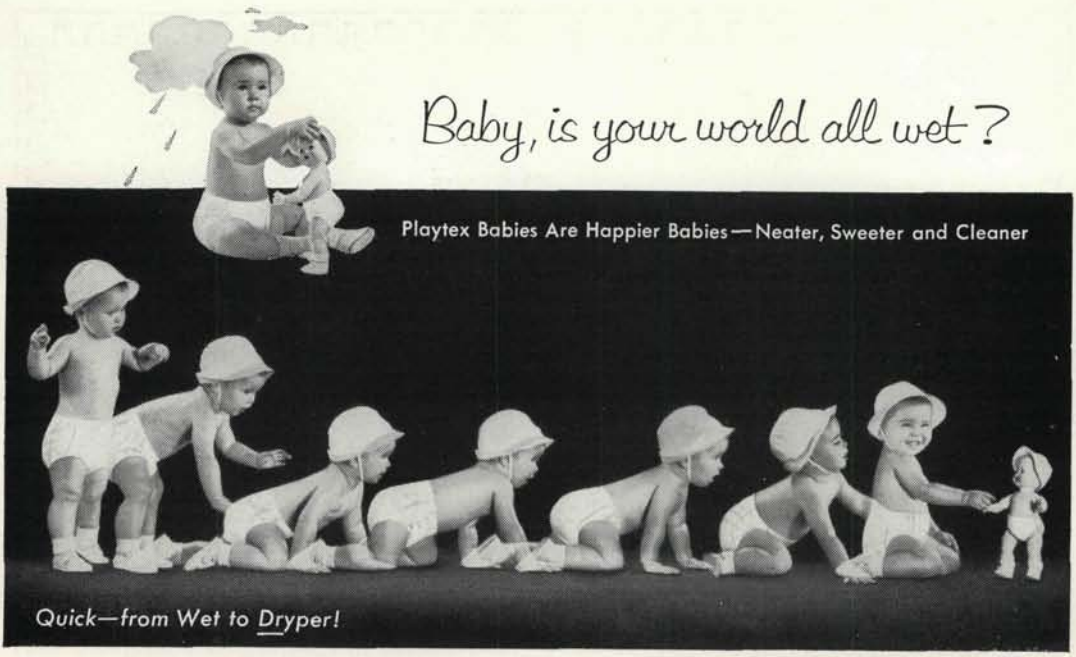

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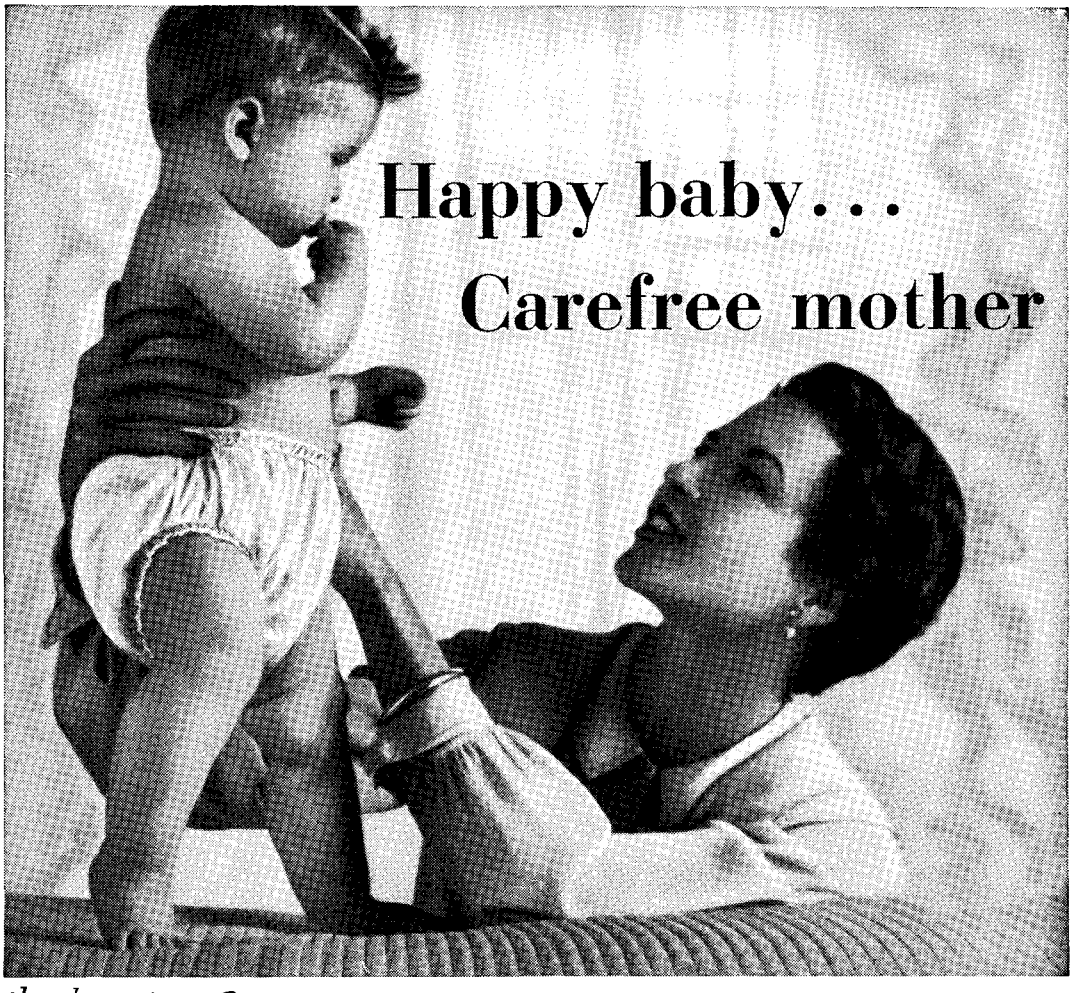

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The New Fascist International *L. Poliakov*

The revival of fascism in Europe is no longer a phenomenon local to Germany and Italy alone. That it is being reborn in a new *international* form, colored by Nazism but no longer anchored in nationalism, is documented for us in this startling report, which contains names, dates, and places.

A Jewish Scholar *Herbert Weiner*

A rare portrait of an East Side humanist who in poverty and obscurity has given fifty years to the study and interpretation of the chief fount of Jewish mysticism, the Zohar—and who at last permits himself to assert that he understands passages that were beyond Rabbi Moses Cordovero himself.

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COMMENTARY

WASHINGTON COMES TO ISRAEL'S ECONOMIC RESCUE

Both Emergency Aid and Long-Range Construction

HAL LEHRMAN

WASHINGTON

THE balm of sovereignty, and four years of physical co-existence, have worked a natural but nonetheless wonderful change in relations between the government of the United States and the government of Israel.

It does not mean much to say that these relations have never been better, when one recalls the mutual antagonisms of 1948, the State Department's frustrations and resentments, and the misgivings in Tel Aviv about the sincerity, clarity, or unity of American policy. The happy fact is, however, that they are not only better but good.

They are good, essentially, because they are normal. The spokesman for Israel in Washington is no longer a representative of the Jewish Agency—a voluntary organization without sovereign status—catapulted overnight to higher dignity, well earned though that may have been. The spokesman for the United States in Tel Aviv is no longer an enlightened and eloquent amateur selected as a token of Presidential good will, but the Department of State's free choice, a practiced career diplomat, no less friendly toward Israel in private than his predecessor but officially more effective because *persona grata* on Virginia Avenue as well as in the *Kirya*. The four years since statehood, also, have regularized Israel's status through the normal day-to-day intercourse of accredited emissaries and through the normal exchange of views and commitments between two sovereign governments. An Ambassador of Israel has ceased to be a novelty at diplomatic receptions or in the antechamber of a Secretary; Israeli military attachés, economic counsellors, and the rest have become familiar and accepted faces across the desks of their American colleagues. Files of formal notes and communications have flowed in both directions, agreements have been made, pacts ratified,

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OBSERVERS agree that Israel's continuing sharp crisis has two roots, economic inadequacy and the unsolved Arab-Israeli conflict. Into both, the American government has found itself thrust by events; and it seems clear that it cannot avoid playing a decisive role. Against this background, COMMENTARY asked HAL LEHRMAN—whose *Israel: The Beginning and Tomorrow* is acknowledged the most authoritative book on the economic and political progress and problems of the new state—to go to Washington and find out what he could of our government's plans as to economic aid and diplomatic action regarding Israel and its Arab neighbors. The present article relates what he discovered in the economic area; a following article will be devoted to the diplomatic situation, and our State Department's approach to Israel in the context of the Near East crisis. Mr. Lehrman was born in New York City in 1911; he won a considerable reputation as chief of the OWI in Turkey and as correspondent in the present satellite countries immediately after the war.

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courtesies extended and received. Like ivy and moss on old battlements, time has begun to deposit a venerable decorum on a broad boulevard which was once a winding path beset with pitfalls and ambuscades.

Moreover, and most important of all, the entire concept of a state called Israel and located in the Middle East has been transformed in official minds, American and Israeli alike. Washington no longer wonders distantly whether or not there "ought to be" such a state, or whether it could exist. And in Tel Aviv nobody in authority clings any more to the notion that Israel might be a "bridge" between East and West, or remain "non-identified" in the global struggle, or be anything but proudly enlisted in the cause of worldwide resistance to the totalitarianism which threatens us all. Consequently, responsiveness and uninhibited cordiality are manifest from Israel, and from the American side emanate the respect, sympathy, and support accorded a reliable friend. Marks of favor are not granted to Israel these days reluctantly, after divided counsels, as a result of public emotion or political pressure, real or imagined; they are offered as a result of considered policy, in the common interest.

YET it would be naive to assume that, because relations are now securely grounded in blessed routine and reciprocal esteem, they are placid and undisturbed. On the contrary, there continue to be large differences of view, and occasionally sharp impatience on both sides. Paradoxically, tempers are much cooler than in 1948 but the area of discussion has vastly widened.

The bitter contest over Israel's right to independence and territorial integrity, or over the feasibility of permitting the emergence of such a state at the possible risk of Middle Eastern upheaval, is, as we have said, ended. History has resolved these matters in Israel's favor. The issues are now of longer range: not how to keep the Middle East quiet but how to render the Middle East defensible; not how to prevent the Arab and Jewish populations from destroying one another but how to make each of the Arab states and Israel severally, and all of them together, a zone of security against destruction from outside.

There is no dispute between the United States and Israel on the merit of these global objectives. The division comes over methods to achieve them. Here the argument arises from the old dilemma: what to do about the Arabs? And here, allowing for changed circumstances caused by passage of momentous events, we encounter the same divergence of attitude as in 1948. The Americans tend to consider the Arabs amenable to conciliatory tactics, whereas the Israelis tend to consider them amenable only to persuasion by strength. In these contradictory estimates of Israel's neighbors lies the main obstacle today to complete agreement between Washington and Tel Aviv.

In one area of diplomacy, however, no such tension exists—the area of American concern for Israel's economy. Indeed, Israeli-American relations in that field are singularly harmonious. Since the economic aspects of Israel's survival are the most immediate of her numerous physical problems, let us make a closer inspection first of American economic policy, its present program, its motivations, and its supreme importance for the young state, leaving the matter of political relations for a following article.

MANY other countries have obtained considerably larger economic assistance from the United States; but *on a per capita basis*—with the possible exception of Greece—Israel heads the list in terms of total cash made available for every man, woman, and child since the state's creation. This does not include the even greater sums Israel has received from private American philanthropy, investment, and loans; it refers only to public funds placed at Israel's disposal by agencies of the United States.

In January 1949, the Export-Import Bank agreed to lend Israel $100,000,000, mainly for industrial, agricultural, and communications expansion; less than two years later

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the Bank added an extra $35,000,000 farm credit. Just as the bottom of these loans was starting to be scraped toward the end of 1951, Congress in October voted a free grant-in-aid of nearly $65,000,000. Of this grant, whose fiscal term extended to June 30, 1952, $50,000,000 from Mutual Security Program funds was earmarked for Jewish refugee rehabilitation in Israel, another $13,500,000 from MSP for economic development, and $1,200,000 from Point Four funds. This year Congress has approved a second grant of slightly over $70,000,000 for refugee aid and close to $3,000,000 for Point Four technical assistance, the latter appropriation now coming directly from MSP resources.

It is noteworthy that the total grant in 1952 was higher than in 1951 despite two facts: that Israel had *asked* for more in 1951 ($150,000,000 as against $125,000,000), and that the Congressional trend this year, responding to the apparent inclinations of defense-minded American taxpayers, was to emphasize military assistance abroad at the expense of purely economic aid. The increase for Israel—with a corresponding increase for Arabs as well—largely reflected an intensified American awareness of the Middle East's regional importance in world stability. Adding $20,000,000 worth of surplus foodstuffs, total U.S. government assistance will have reached a value of around $293,000,000 by June 1953.

THE Export-Import Bank loan having been exhausted except for some minor credits, the grant-in-aid is at this moment the active expression of American economic policy toward Israel. The grant is being implemented by the Technical Cooperation Administration, a separate agency within the framework of the MSP and the State Department. This agency, which disburses only Point Four funds in the rest of the Middle East, administers *all* of the current American economic program for Israel.

A new organization, TCA has had to become acquainted with procedure as it has gone experimentally along. Work has been hampered by a shortage of American economic personnel in the mission to Tel Aviv headed by Bruce McDaniel, and by the admitted cumbersomeness of the mechanisms in both capitals. Each proposed project has had to shuttle between Israel and the United States, accumulating several dozen signatures before it could be fully ratified as eligible under the grant.

Within the restraints of such complicated procedure, however, TCA is performing with vigor, imagination, and a sympathetic appreciation of the urgency of Israel's needs. All of the 1951-52 funds have now been absorbed; release of the 1952-53 funds is actually ahead of the fiscal calendar; and management of the entire program has been infused with a most liberal spirit in interpreting the letter of the law.

AS WRITTEN, the Acts in both years set aside the bulk of the grants explicitly for *refugee* "relief and resettlement." Nearly identical sums were also voted each time for *Palestine* refugees, i.e., the Arabs who had become displaced in the Arab-Israeli war and were now mostly outside Israeli territory. At minimum, the intent of Congress clearly had been to be equal-handed, helping Arab homeless and helping Jewish homeless. At the same time, the device of juxtaposing Arab and Jewish refugees facilitated the voting of a larger over-all refugee *and* economic aid appropriation for Israel than might have looked reasonable if a Jewish category of refugee had been omitted from the reckoning.

But how much deeper had the Congressional intention gone? Was the stipulation for Jewish refugees merely a benevolent fiction, or did the Act really mean that money so ticketed be expended particularly and exclusively for them? If the latter was the meaning, how in all good faith could it be executed? In an economy where virtually everything was in short supply, the introduction of extra quantities of any kind of useful commodity meant a reduction of want in the entire community. The immigrants were a part of the community, not

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separate from it, and they could be maintained only from whatever resources were available to the state itself. As for "resettlement," it was physically impossible to expend money for the economic integration solely of the refugees. The immigrants could only be absorbed as the general economy grew progressively larger to absorb them. Such growth would of necessity affect the status of all persons living within the economy, not exclusively of the refugees.

For that matter, just who was a "refugee" in Israel, and who was not? Could one arbitrarily draw a line between those who had fled to Palestine from their places of origin before 1948 and those who had come since 1948—nearly all of them essentially for the same reasons? Indeed, was not Israel herself, in the context of at least two generations and even earlier, a kind of refugee "project"? Save for a very few, relatively, wasn't every Israeli born abroad a refugee, in a manner of speaking? And since the child of refugees is an element of any refugee problem, did this not include even Israel's native-born, the sabras, except perhaps those themselves born of sabras?

At any rate, the implementers of the Congressional grants have not attempted the impossible task of channeling the major part of the funds to any chronological segment of Israel's population. They have evidently been content to strive for the general and ultimate objectives of the law, to assist Israel in the care of her refugees *and* the strengthening of her economy. Determination of the lines of action which would benefit immigrants has been left, more or less, to the sovereign judgment of the independent Israeli government. Each Israeli project has required TCA approval, but the agency's criterion has been that a flow of the basic ingredients for maintenance and growth—food, fuel, housing, factory equipment, raw materials, developmental machinery and the like—be kept up as fully as the American grants permit.

Nor has there been any bureaucratic insistence on heavy purchases of developmental equipment in the face of the population's more immediate need for consumer goods. Ideally, the more foreign exchange spent on importing materials and machinery for export-producing industry, agriculture, and other sectors of economic expansion, the better for Israel's long-range development. But people must eat, transport must function, and many other things must be done to keep a country going without necessarily increasing its productive capacity. These needs require the importation of commodities like wheat and fuel. Israel, not having sufficient foreign credits from other sources, has dipped more deeply than desirable into American grant money for purchase of such vital consumer commodities.

Export-Import Bank funds have been concentrated on development, following the letter of the contract. But TCA, while applying some restraint on consumer items, has refrained from a "let-them-eat-cake" attitude. True, Congress itself facilitated this leniency by emphasizing refugee relief as the predominant objective of its legislation. But under the terms of its charter TCA might have demanded larger emphasis on capital goods, for the ultimate benefit of the economy, than it has actually obtained. This despite the concern of TCA, some Israeli authorities, and many independent observers over the relative inadequacy in the capital expansion sector of grant expenditures. Of the fiscal 1952 purchase schedule, only $8,000,000—hardly 13 per cent—went for development materials. (And nearly one-third of this applied to housing, an item which is vital to a modern economy but is not itself a direct contribution to production.) Again, of the grant money thus far programmed for fiscal 1953, 90 per cent buys consumer goods. The ability of technicians to look beyond the rule-book and see stark human want is a measure of U.S. government sympathy for Israel.

For scheduling of allocations, the grant year beginning July 1 is divided into three periods of four months each. By October 30, $42,500,000—more than one-half the total appropriation for 1952-53—is expected

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to have been placed at Israel's disposal. A $17,500,000 slice is for approved critical imports, the remaining $25,000,000 to help Israel pay her debts. This may seem to be a routine, unsensational bit of information, but it is filled with meaning.

It means, first of all, that Israel is using up the American grant at an excessively fast pace. Only some $30,000,000 will remain, to be stretched thin over eight long, lean months. This is hardly enough to keep the pipeline steadily flowing with tolerable quantities of supplies. And it means, too, that the major part of the money which will have been released to Israel by the end of the first period merely pays for goods already bought, delivered, and in great measure consumed, rather than for materials which the country may still expect to receive.

The situation reflects a chronic symptom of one of Israel's basic economic maladies, an ailment at the core of her present frustration as she strains to make her economy sufficiently productive to support her expanded population. The malady is her continued drastic deficiency of foreign exchange with which to pay for the productive equipment she must buy abroad. The symptom is the recurrent crisis in meeting the maturity dates of the short-term emergency loans which she has been obliged continually to seek in relief of her foreign-exchange poverty and which she is always just barely able to pay off.

It is necessary at this juncture to stress two points, the first reassuring about the Israeli position, the second reassuring about the American role:

1. The application of $25,000,000 from the grant for payment of old debts instead of new purchases does not mean that the purpose of the grant is being distorted. Successful meeting of loan obligations maintains Israel's credit and helps her to make fresh loans on the basis of a reaffirmed reputation for paying her debts. Moreover, the assumption must be that, although the specific dollars released in this instance by TCA may not buy anything new, they help to pay for "refugee relief and resettlement" supplies within the fiscal periods or to liberate other Israeli foreign exchange for imports. Seen in this light, the TCA advance for relief of Israel's credit would be as good as an advance for acquisition of supplies. Ultimately the Israeli government submits vouchers to TCA for the full value of the specific purchases agreed upon.

2. The TCA action, however, involves more than an artful bookkeeping transaction. Nor is it, as some have tried to explain it away, just a seasonal gesture of complaisance to tide Israel through the summer, when collections of pledges to the United Jewish Appeal, the Israeli government Independence Bond drive, and other standard sources customarily fall off. The practice of borrowing from Peter to pay Paul may have frequent precedents—but it is not a productive method of financing for Israel over the long pull. In an effort to break the cycle, the United States on this occasion has asked and received Israeli commitments for projected reforms. The attempt may not bring large results, but at this moment the American action may justifiably be assessed as economic statesmanship. Events behind the financial screen in recent months have been interesting and, in their technical way, even dramatic. And a total view of the U.S. aid program demonstrates that, far from pouring money down an Israeli drain or just providing stop-gap assistance, Washington is stimulating economic growth and financial rehabilitation.

EXACT figures are hard to come by, but $100,000,000—it may be more—is taken to be a fairly shrewd figure for the total of Israel's current short-term indebtedness. This is not as staggering as it is sometimes thought to be, but it is grievous enough. It must be said that obligations, in significant part, stem from commitments predating the grant-in-aid program. And the root of the trouble is traceable to the very beginnings of Israel's independent existence.

Cut off from Arab markets and invaded by Arab armies, the fledgling state lacked food, fuel, arms, other essentials—and ready

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cash abroad to pay for them. The desperate provisional government had to turn to all possible sources for quick loans—to banks with friendly directors, to American Jewish institutions, to suppliers willing to give Israel a brief breathing spell between delivery and payment, even to wealthy private individuals. Such loans were mainly short-term—to be repaid in three months or six or nine or twelve, from anticipated income. When the due dates arrived, the government paid, but then had to borrow again to meet new needs. It was never possible to catch up.

The increasing burden of rising world prices, the swelling immigration, and other factors kept pushing the Israeli Treasury farther and farther into the red. Israel's incessant call for cash compelled Jewish communities in the United States to borrow from local banks against expected collections on pledges; agencies like Hadassah, the United Palestine Appeal, and the Joint Distribution Committee took bank mortgages on future philanthropic income in order to obtain immediate funds for the bolstering of Israel's credit. An interministerial loan commission in Israel, and a "coordinating committee" in New York composed of representatives from the Israeli Treasury, the Jewish Agency, and other groups, convened intermittently to determine how much fresh borrowing was needed in each new interval and where to turn this time for emergency aid. In only one instance known to this writer, back in 1949, was an offer of a short-term loan declined, during a temporary flurry of determination to reduce the indebtedness at all costs. Otherwise, every matured debt signaled a frantic scramble for more cash. No serious effort was made systematically to plan and schedule expenditures in advance on the basis of real income. Inexorably, such hand-to-mouth financing led to disordered administration of the state's foreign exchange resources.

The voting of grant money by Congress in 1951 opened new credit vistas for Israel's harassed financial leaders. By an exchange of notes in December, scarcely $11,000,000 of the first half of the grant was earmarked to contract for new purchases of foodstuffs, power plant components, and irrigation equipment; the remaining $14,000,000 was released to pay for purchases already made of wheat, oil seeds, petroleum, and raw cotton. By last spring, TCA completed a month-by-month scheduling of supplies to be delivered for the remainder of the grant year—again to see the whole careful program thwarted by the season's short-term loan crisis. Israeli Commerce Minister Dov Joseph flew to Washington and persuaded officials there to release for debt liquidation the bulk of the surviving funds.

This summer, when Foreign Minister Moshe Sharett was here, he proposed a new approach to Assistant Secretary of State Willard L. Thorp, Mutual Security chief Averell Harriman, and other high economic officials: that the whole of Israel's short-term indebtedness be refunded through a single long-term loan from the Export-Import Bank. This would eliminate the pressures of recurrent deadlines once and for all, and give Israel a respite of ten years or more in which to straighten her finances, mainly by augmenting her production.

IN THE past the United States had yielded to Israeli importunities with extreme reluctance. It was felt that unorthodox short-term financing upset long-range planning for expanded production and that over-emphasis on consumption commodities was impeding the country's growth in capital plant. Under ordinary circumstances it could hardly be agreeable to the United States to watch its fresh credits going to pay Israel's old debts. Accordingly, economist Raymond Mikesell, of the University of Virginia, was dispatched to Israel this time to assess the dilemma at the scene. On the basis of his recommendations, Washington has now realistically consented to advance Israel $25,000,000, since the need could not be ignored. The money, however, is to come from TCA funds already voted—on the apparent political decision that assistance on this occasion should be drawn from sums sanctioned by existing

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legislation. And the Israelis, it is reliably learned, have contingently been invited to take definite action for self-cure—within the limits possible—of their short-term debt troubles.

In consequence the Israeli Embassy has given the State Department formal assurance of its government's intention to adopt a series of important remedial measures. Among them: a new board will be established with firm authority to serve as bureau of the budget and general accounting office for the purpose of imposing tighter controls on the borrowing and spending of foreign exchange; by the end of September, the Israeli Treasury is committed to produce a foreign exchange budget that balances; to keep better tabs on the short-term situation, there will be bi-weekly reports showing debts paid, new obligations incurred, debts outstanding, and other data. In addition a group of American financial experts reportedly will go to Israel to work, in conjunction with our Embassy and TCA mission there, on a long-range solution of the short-term debt problem.

It is nothing new in Israel for budgets to be drawn up annually listing priority imports in terms of anticipated foreign currency. But such budgets have been loosely policed and they have been vulnerable to dislocation through pressure from internal interests. Not infrequently, scarce foreign exchange has been allocated for non-priority imports. (It has been charged, for instance, that there is enough steel in unnecessary balconies on new Tel Aviv buildings to construct a good-sized skyscraper.) Conversely, there has been a crippling shortage of industrial raw materials, without which factories cannot operate.

It is hoped that tighter controls can husband the resources more judiciously and at the same time put a curb somehow on the habit of exuberant borrowing. In a sense, Israeli finance has been coddled by the relative ease of obtaining "sentimental loans" based on remarkably little real collateral. To a degree not entirely justified by actual need, it is believed, this facility has encouraged an over-extension of credit to purchase commodities of only secondary value for a scarcity economy.

The $25,000,000 TCA advance should relieve the goad of short-term maturities for several months. It would be considered a triumph by some quarters if thereafter the line could simply be held at the existing level of obligations. Others hope that a way may be found to achieve a positive reduction in short-term debts. In fact, another condition reportedly attached to the TCA advance was that Israel should make intensive effort in the next months to convert up to $50,000,000 of her private short-term debts to long-term. There is admittedly small likelihood of any brilliant success in this. The brightest prospect for some relief from the compulsion of new borrowing is seen in German reparations, the first trickle of which may arrive before the year closes. Transfer of around $17,000,000 of German assets in Britain, for instance, will spare Israel at least $1,000,000 monthly in foreign exchange expenditures for fuel imports. Although no formal application for refunding assistance has been made to the Export-Import Bank, Israel has not yet despaired of help from that direction. Another type of remedy, originating with the American-Palestine Trading Corporation (AMPAL), envisages formation of a private company capitalized at upwards of $25,000,000 to take care of loan emergencies. This proposal is encountering opposition from the bond drive, which fears that creation of such a credit group would drain off money otherwise susceptible to capture through bonds.

Certainly the difficulty cannot be eliminated at one stroke. But observers believe that scrupulous control could effectively reduce its size. Moreover, stern supervision of income and outgo could distribute sacrifice more equitably and make increased sacrifices in the future acceptable because of heightened public morale. Resolute scheduling of expenditures on a yearly basis before rather than after the money is spent could have great psychological value in letting the pub-

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lic know precisely how much supplies may be expected from abroad and how much will have to be produced at home. According to reports from Israel, an effort is already manifest to save foreign exchange for debt repayment by reducing allocations for importation of food as well as industrial raw materials. Harsh though it undoubtedly is in view of the austerity already in force, most analysts in Israel and abroad agree that the people of Israel must themselves provide the largest part of the cure by more belt-tightening: harder work, greater privation, larger economies. The United States is aware of the need for such a Spartan program, is trying by legitimate means to encourage its adoption, and yet at the same time is adding generous and timely material assistance to its sound advice. Such conduct demonstrates the benevolence and enlightened good will of American economic policy toward the Israeli democracy.

BY FORTIFYING the foreign exchange position and providing funds for purchase of basic supplies, the U.S. grants-in-aid represent a formidable boost to Israel's ability to maneuver in foreign markets and her capacity for expansion at home. The latter need is helped still more by various technical aspects of the American program. For example, the dollars will do double work for the Israeli Treasury because the Ben Gurion government, by selling domestically the supplies received through the United States as a gift, obtains pounds which help pay for local costs of internal development projects approved by TCA. For mechanical reasons, these "counterpart funds" have taken time to accumulate, but a first slice of over 4,000,000 Israeli pounds has been allocated for housing, hospitals, social welfare, and farm irrigation.

Another internal contribution is the Point Four part of the program. At the outset, no special emphasis was placed on introduction of advanced methods and training; $800,000 left for the purpose after administrative expenses in 1951 was barely tapped. This year, however, the 1951 balance outstanding, plus the new appropriation of nearly $3,000,000, have already sparked a good number of projects--among them improvement of laboratory facilities, founding of trade schools, training of Israeli technicians in the United States, and instruction by American experts in Israel on irrigation methods, citrus fruit production, and other technological subjects. Particular emphasis is being placed on organization of public health services. (Although Israel's corps of physicians, mostly European refugees, has high professional quality, its numbers are inadequate; an acute shortage in young doctors is causing sharp concern for the future.) A parallel "know-how" program by the United Nations is helping in tax reform, agriculture, fisheries, and port operations. The potential value of such activity cannot be over-estimated in terms of higher productivity, improved service, and even cash savings: if better production methods can cut costs in foreign exchange or increase income, the result will obviously be better for Israel morally and financially than an extra grant of an equal amount of actual dollars. Gift money is consumed, but improved productivity automatically repeats and compounds its benefits year after year.

COMPARED with the astronomical sums for economic and military aid to Western Europe, the total of American grants and loans to Israel is insignificant. Within the dimensions of Israel's own economy, however, the program is tremendous. One need only consider the relative share it has played and continues to play in various sectors.

According to the Israelis' own figures, nearly 35 per cent of the new development equipment acquired abroad in 1950—the first full year of Export-Import Bank loan availability—was paid for by that loan. In agriculture, the Bank's credits eventually helped an estimated 32,000 farms, numerous regional irrigation schemes, a chemical fertilizer plant, and rehabilitation of the country's neglected citrus groves. The credits

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also assisted 300 industrial firms, improved Israel's port facilities, telephone and telegraph, air, ship, road, and rail transportation. Without the relatively small amount spent on key American construction machinery and building materials, Israeli specialists admit, the entire housing program might have been paralyzed. About one-fourth of Israel's food imports during 1951-52 was purchased with grant dollars. Not all of the income anticipated in the 1951-52 special development budget was received (the bond drive, in particular, failed to vindicate its American promoters' rash promises); not all of the income which did arrive from other sources was spent on development; but of the I.L.85,000,000 income originally scheduled, a full I.L.30,-000,000 was from U.S. loan and grant money. This past August, in calculating the "special receipts" to balance his new development budget for 1952-53, Finance Minister Levi Eshkol told the Knesset that half would be provided by the current grant-in-aid alone. The unique ability of the U.S. government to help Israel was highlighted in May by Prime Minister Churchill's rejection of an Israeli application for a $14,-000,000 credit to buy fuel. Although British policy had been friendly in all aspects and positively generous in economic relations since 1948, Britain could not now make this additional concession—primarily because of her own painful dollar shortage.

And Israel must continue, it seems clear, to rely heavily on U.S. assistance in the future. Immigration has greatly lightened, but it now takes eighteen to thirty months to absorb the predominantly Oriental newcomers as contrasted with six months for European immigrants when the state was at the beginning of its hectic population growth. Recent surveys show that Israel has the world's highest percentage—29.3—of gainfully employed persons engaged in public services, professions, trade, and finance. Ordinarily such a sophisticated ratio would indicate an advanced economy; in this case, it shows the contrary, for Israeli industry and crafts, in their present under-capitalization, are inadequate to give work to the available labor force, while the immigration at large is not attracted to agriculture. The consequence is a production crisis which cannot be surmounted without large importations of capital plant and materials—and these in turn cannot be paid for without foreign help.

American Jewish philanthropy and bond sales are on a downward trend. Private foreign investment may be moderately stimulated by a recent U.S.-Israeli guarantee against non-convertibility or expropriation, but nobody expects an invasion by American entrepreneurs as a result. Internally, the poverty of Israel's governmental finances—and the galloping inflation—were underscored by this summer's compulsory loan of 10 per cent of bank accounts and the choice between a capital levy that ranges up to 6 per cent or a forced loan up to 12 per cent of other holdings. Some wan hope of sudden wealth is lodged in the exploitation of mineral resources and the possible discovery of oil, but these lie in the unexplorable future. Greater faith is justified in the $715,-000,000 of reparations goods and credits negotiated with West Germany for delivery over the next twelve to fourteen years—unless German reaction takes over before then, Israel is already drawing up ambitious developmental programs for all major economic sections based on expectation of at least $40,000,000 from the German agreement in 1953. As most of the indemnity deliveries are to be for developmental purposes, they should strongly offset the current imbalance of consumer goods. But this too will take time before substantial application. Meanwhile, as one Israeli candidly put it to this writer the other day, "we continue to be enormously dependent on American aid." There is reason to believe, in the light of present American policy, that Israel will receive it, whatever our next administration.

THE American government is helping Israel because such help is considered to be in the American national interest. To be sure, humanitarian sympathy plays a part

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in the shaping of this policy. So does the fact that a large number of this country's five million Jews desire support of Israel and contribute independently to it. But the major cause is that official Washington genuinely desires it too, for reasons of state.

Israel's survival and strengthening, impossible without a viable economy, have become a firm element of U.S. foreign policy. Even a sweeping Republican victory in November would not change this attitude. Israel is generally important, first of all, because she is inside the borders of that free world which it is in our interest to buttress economically against totalitarian temptations and for the sake of an enduring peace based on equitable global living standards. From the White House down, through all interested agencies, there is strong conviction that Israel cannot do without "considerable outside assistance" no matter how great the savings she may make by internal austerity. And Israel is specifically important because, inside the strategic Arab Middle East, she is the only functioning democracy and our only truly dependable friend—with a stable government, a high rate of literacy and skill, and a competent military establishment. "It is in the interest of the United States that Israel remain free and independent, as well as friendly to the United States," the National Security Council has said. ". . . Existing strains and tensions in the economy of Israel are already severe. Curtailment of United States technical and economic assistance, under these circumstances, would affect adversely United States security interests."

Direct contact of aid administrators with Israelis has served to fortify confidence in Israel's reliability—an experience which in part explains the unusual enthusiasm of the Americans and their exceptional cooperativeness in accommodating their blueprints to Israel's emergency needs. The contrast with Arab performance is an additional score in favor of Israel.

THE United States would also welcome the opportunity of contributing on a really large scale to Arab economic development—provided the Arabs were politically receptive to such aid and technically capable of using it. Neither of these circumstances exists. There was some private consideration earlier this year of an introductory program envisaging disbursement of $100,000,000 for economic development in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan, but the matter has been tabled because objective factors in the area at this time give small prospect of success. It will be recalled that the Arab counterparts of the Congressional appropriations for refugees—$50,000,000 in 1951, $60,000,000 in 1952—were turned over, not to the Arab League or the individual states where the Arab refugees reside, but to a UN agency.

As for the grants specifically made to Arab governments under Point Four, amounting to around $16,000,000 last year and $20,000,000 currently, the 1952 program has not begun and the 1951 funds have still not been fully spent. Intense Arab resistance was manifest from the outset because of a clause in the Mutual Security Act which, while it exacted no pledge of any sort, seemed to suggest that the Arabs ought to make common cause with the "free world." Wealthy landowning classes, notably in Lebanon, suspected that Point Four improvement of irrigation and living conditions might enlighten their underprivileged tenants and make them harder to exploit. In other instances other prejudices, and everywhere a dearth of trained native peronnel, retarded and restricted the American drive to introduce "know-how." At this writing, Syria and Yemen have not yet accepted any Point Four aid at all. Except for feudal Saudi Arabia and British-influenced Jordan, cooperation in other Arab countries has been minimal.

The Israelis, on the other hand, have welcomed this and all other parts of the American program with gratitude and relatively high competence. Not that Israel entirely lacks bureaucrats, special interests, inefficiency, and some Balkan-Oriental lethargy of her own. In fact, it was after some months

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without an active Point Four program that TCA decided it had better not accept Israel as perfect, and began devising methods of introducing Western techniques over as broad an area as feasible. But the Israelis' energy, eagerness to learn, and ability to cooperate have made their country an oasis of Western-minded progress for American field representatives and shapers of policy in Washington alike. In the foreign economic branches of the U.S. government there is deep intellectual and emotional belief that the one sure way to Middle Eastern tranquillity must lie in betterment of mass living conditions—from great irrigation and equipment programs to rural schools, clinics, and dissemination of homely "know-how" about raising better poultry and disarming malarial mosquitos. All levels of U.S. economic planning are impressed by Israel's possibilities as a guide and inspiration to an Arab Middle East now lagging two to ten centuries behind her.

The degree of such inspiration, of course, must first depend on the Arabs' readiness to soften their present implacable hostility toward Israel. In the meantime, the American intention seems to be to strive for the best results in the one country ready and able to benefit amply from American help. Since objectives on both sides are mutually acceptable and legitimately concern nobody except the two partners to the enterprise, Israeli-American economic relations are strikingly free from the strain which marks and sometimes mars other aspects of their relations. Naturally, there are disagreements on procedure, and even an occasional grave disappointment for Israel, as lately in the matter of the Sharett appeal for a refunding loan. But these arise from the substance of the problem, rather than from primary fear of repercussions in other countries. It is nobody else's business—a sound doctrine largely responsible for the progress of U. S.-Israeli economic statesmanship to date.

On the broader terrain of traditional diplomacy, however, this reasoning is not made to apply. That terrain embraces all the *regional* political and military issues, where, unlike economic aid, the relationship is not a simple bilateral one between Americans and Israelis. These are the areas where Arab and Israeli interests overlap and tangle, where the United States considers its basic role at this moment to be that of referee or conciliator rather than partner.

Included in this zone are such envenomed points of irritation as the Palestine refugee impasse, the status of Jerusalem, the Suez Canal blockade, and the problem of free American grants of arms and military equipment. Most of all, the controversial terrain includes the cardinal question of regional defense—how we, the British, the French, the Turks, and other interested powers are to recruit the angry Middle East for the greater security of the non-totalitarian world. These are questions of first importance in U. S.-Israeli relations. An attempt will be made to discuss them at length here in a subsequent article.

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WHAT THE FEAST OF BOOTHS CELEBRATES

The Meaning of Succoth for Moderns

THEODOR H. GASTER

OF THE three seasonal festivals which punctuate the Jewish year, the Feast of Succoth (or Booths) has suffered most from the conditions of modern life and, for all the tenacity of its observance, possesses for the modern Jew the least contemporary relevance.

The first reason for this is purely practical. Traditionally, the principal feature of the festival is the erection of a *succah*, or trellis-roofed booth, in the precincts of one's own home. This was intended not only to commemorate the fact that the ancient Israelites dwelt in booths during their sojourn in the wilderness but also to provide their living descendants with a means of sharing in that experience. In most modern cities this is obviously impossible, and the conventional substitute is a communal succah set up in the courtyard of the synagogue. But this involves not only a curtailment of the traditional rite but also an attenuation of its significance. In the first place, the element of personal labor and construction disappears altogether; the succah is put up by paid employees or professional contractors. Second, although the matrons of the congregation may indeed foregather, a few days before the festival, to deck the structure with fruits and flowers, these do not, as a rule, represent offerings from their own gardens or orchards, but are simply bought for cash at the local grocer and florist. Last, a perfunctory visit to the succah after the synagogue service is obviously no substitute for actually living and sleeping in it: what should be a reproduction of ancestral hardship becomes mere attendance at a social function; and the succah itself is reduced to an artistic showpiece. Small wonder, then, that the festival loses its personal immediacy.

The other reason for Succoth's decline is ideological. Passover and the Feast of Weeks, though geared to particular events in the past, epitomize and focus elements of Judaism which continue in the present—namely, the progressive mission and adventure of Israel, its persistent struggle for freedom, and its special Covenant with God. In this continuous adventure, in this struggle and in this Covenant, every Jew in every generation is personally involved, so that observance of these festivals is a direct personal experience, part and parcel of his own individual life, and not a mere act of pious remembering. Succoth, on the other hand, seems (apart from its seasonal significance) to be moored and anchored to a single specific event, to the particular situation of a particular group at a particular moment of time. At a distance of more than three thousand years and miles, the modern Jew finds it difficult to recognize in the historical incident of his forefathers' sojourn in booths anything in the nature of a continuing experience which he can personally repeat. Once again, therefore, the festival degenerates into a mere memorial.

VIEWED in the proper light, however, Succoth can possess a continuing significance no whit inferior, and in fact

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THEODOR H. GASTER here continues his series in COMMENTARY on the ancient and contemporary meanings of the great Jewish festivals of the holiday year. "What Does the Seder Celebrate?" (March 1951) and "The First Fruits and the Giving of the Law" (May 1952) dealt with Passover and Shavuoth. During the past year Mr. Gaster was visiting professor in the history of religions at the University of Rome. He has been chief of the Semitic section of the Library of Congress and professor of comparative religions at Dropsie College, and is the author of *Passover: Its History and Traditions* (1949), *Thespis: Ritual, Myth and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (1950), and *Purim and Hanukkah in Custom and Tradition* (1950).

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complementary to, that of the other seasonal festivals. For if Passover and the Feast of Weeks exemplify, in the stories of the Exodus and the Covenant, the trials, achievements, and obligations, first of Israel and then of mankind in general, the transcendental theme of Succoth is the persistent hope and confidence without which all such trials are insupportable, all such achievements impossible, and all such obligations unacceptable. The essential point about it is, indeed, that, alike in its seasonal and in its historical aspect, what Succoth celebrates is not an achievement but a prospect, not something finally accomplished but something which has been but begun and the consummation of which still lies in the future. On the seasonal plane, Succoth marks the ingathering of the harvest and the beginning of the rains; but the harvest is consumed only in the ensuing months, while when the festival actually takes place, none but the first token drops of rain have yet fallen. Similarly, on the historical plane, the festival commemorates not the actual entry of the Israelites into the Promised Land but the fact that, in the certain hope of it, they wandered in a wilderness for forty years, protected only by the shelter of fragile booths.

Thus interpreted, Succoth is pertinent not only to every generation but also to every individual. For every individual can at once recognize in it an experience which is repeated in his own life; every individual knows that the only sure sustainment of labor is hope, and that the Promised Land is reached only after years of wandering.

It is curious indeed that the ancient rabbis should, by and large, have missed this essential point, insisting rather that the booths symbolize the frailty of human existence. This, however, seems to put the emphasis in the wrong place, for what is really important is not the frailty of the booths but the toughness of the men who dwelt in them. In another sense, too, the symbol of the booth is peculiarly appropriate; for the essence of a booth is that it is not a closed hut but a structure exposed to all the elements; and it is also significant that it must permit a view of the stars.

A SUBSIDIARY but by no means unimportant theme of the festival is what may be called the Merit of the Fathers (Hebrew: *zechuth aboth*). Tradition asserts that when a Jew sits in the succah, the patriarchs of Israel sit with him as his guests, while in the daily prayers for salvation and prosperity--the so-called *hoshanoth* or Hosannas—and likewise in the petitions for rain which are recited in the synagogue on the eighth day, these benefits are invoked in the name of such ancestral worthies as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, Phineas and David. It has been well said that the doctrine of the Merit of the Fathers is a Jewish counterpart to the Christian concept of Original Sin, implying that the fall of man through the sin of Adam may be redeemed by his rise through the virtue of the patriarchs. In a larger sense, however, far more is involved than a belief in the redemptive properties of particular lives and careers—a mere intercession of the saints. What is implied is that the present is informed and conditioned not only by those who actually live in it but also by those who have gone before, that no generation is independent, and that what we reap is, in large measure, the fruit of what our fathers have sown. The message itself may be obvious enough, but the festival of Succoth has the power to drive it home, from year to year, with peculiarly dramatic force. For, on the *seasonal* plane, the fruits which are gathered on this occasion are plucked from trees planted, in many cases, in the distant past; while, on the *historical* plane, Israel's eventual entry into the Promised Land was made possible only by the trial and ordeal of that earlier generation which lodged in booths and itself died in the wilderness.

LIKE Passover and the Feast of Weeks, Succoth originated in an agricultural festival current in the Holy Land from time

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immemorial. But the historical interpretation to which Israel later subjected it was no mere forced imposition or contrived distortion; rather was it an exceedingly delicate and subtle transmutation. *The seasonal and historical aspects of the festival were harmonized with each other and made to run parallel, so that the same basic truth might be expressed concurrently on two planes.* The best illustration of this is afforded by the development of the succah and the *lulab*, the two main features of the celebration.

There are several theories about the real origin of the succah. Some of them, however, may be dismissed at once as improbable or even fantastic. Thus, according to one view, the succah goes back to the temporary shacks set up by pilgrims when they came to the district sanctuary for the celebration of the festival. This, however, loses sight of the fact that such pilgrims likewise came on Passover and the Feast of Weeks; hence there would have been no reason why the booths should have come to be associated so specifically with the autumn festival or why the name "Feast of Booths" should have been reserved exclusively for it. Besides, the prophet Hosea tells us expressly (12:10) that the pilgrims dwelt in *tents*.

An alternative view starts from the fact that a common feature of seasonal festivals in the ancient Near East was the celebration of a "sacred marriage" between the god of fertility and his consort, impersonated respectively by the local king and a female servant of the temple. This rite, it is asserted, was also known in Canaan, and the succah was originally the leafy bower in which the nuptials were consummated. But to this theory, too, there is a fatal objection: the rite in question took place *in the sanctuary;* hence the succah could at best have become a part of the temple, not something set up in private homes.

Far more plausible than these exotic flights of imagination is the simple, straightforward view that the booths were at first nothing but the temporary trellis-roofed cabins in which the harvesters and vintners lodged during the time of the ingathering. Such cabins are still in use in modern Palestine, and it is in this sense that the word *succah* is usually employed in the Bible.

WHATEVER its origin may have been, however, it is certain that the succah was connected primarily with the seasonal and agricultural side of the festival. For Israel, however, this purely utilitarian structure had at the same time to bear a *historical* significance, and it was therefore interpreted as a memorial of the booths in which its ancestors had dwelt during their sojourn in the wilderness. The purely artificial character of this explanation is, of course, immediately apparent: people who wander through the desert live in tents, not booths, wood and green leaves being unavailable except at rare and intermittent oases. This, however, is not particularly important. The "myth" which is woven around a traditional institution is usually more indebted to fancy than to fact, and its validity lies not in its historical accuracy or authenticity but in the transcendental truth which it focuses and conveys. In this case, the truth was that the annual experience of the harvesters and vintners, toiling to bring in the food supply of the coming months, was simply a seasonal counterpart to that of the ancient Israelites who lodged in booths in the wilderness and endured trial and privation in order to make sure that their children or their children's children might reach the Promised Land.

But this was not the only way in which the purely utilitarian booth was invested with historical significance. In sundry passages of the Bible, the word *succah*—or, more precisely, its masculine equivalent, *sok*—serves, by poetic metaphor, to denote the temple of God in Jerusalem. This at once suggested that the seasonal booth might be regarded also as a symbol of that holy habitation. The idea finds repeated expression in the liturgy of the festival. Typical, for example, is a medieval hymn chanted during the morning service of the first day, in which a sustained contrast is drawn between the heavenly and earthly tabernacle. The poem is full of recondite allusions and

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quaint conceits, but its general spirit may perhaps be conveyed by the following partial and paraphrastic rendering:*

Where flaming angels walk in pride,
Where ministers of light abide,
Where cavalries of heaven ride,
Where souls have rest at eventide,
There, 'mid the sapphire and the gold,
God's tabernacle rose of old.

Yet here, as in a mead aflower,
Here, as in a bridal bower,
Here, where songs of praise and power
Wreathe Him, every day and hour,
Here, in an earthly booth as well
His glory did not spurn to dwell.

In the same way, in a poem recited on the eve of the second day, the ruined Temple is likened to a booth fallen to pieces:

Thy tabernacle which is fallen down
Rebuild, O Lord, and raise it once again!

Alternatively, the succah is given a continuing historical meaning by being identified with the protective providence of God, spread like a pavilion over His chosen people. Says the same poem, in reference to the exodus from Egypt:

Thy cloud enfolded them, as if that they
Were shelter'd in a booth; redeem'd and free,
They saw Thy glory as a canopy
Spread o'er them as they marched upon their way.

Jewish tradition insists that the lesson of every seasonal festival be learned afresh by each generation not by mere formal precept but by a faithful reproduction of the original experience. The actual character of the succah is therefore prescribed in detail; no mere token substitute will do. It must not be lower than five feet, nor higher than thirty; and it must contain at least three sides. It may not be roofed with matting or burlap, but only with lightly strewn leaves or straw; it must be exposed to the elements and to a view of the stars. Moreover, since the toil of erecting it is part and parcel of the experience, it must be set up afresh from year to year; no permanent structure will serve.

A SIMILAR development characterizes the lulab. All that the Biblical commandment ordains is that "ye shall take you, on the first day [of the feast], the fruit of a goodly tree, palm-branches, foliage of leafy trees, and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before Jehovah your God seven days" (Lev. 23:40).† What is envisaged is evidently no more than the carrying of a gay bunch, such as is borne by revelers at harvest festivals in many parts of the world. The most obvious example is, of course, the European Maypole, in spring, for although this was later conventionalized as a single beribboned post set up on the village green, it was originally a green bough carried by each of the revelers in token of nature's revival. In Cornwall, for example, doors and porches used to be decked on May morn with boughs of sycamore and hawthorn; while in Sweden and in parts of Alsace boys and girls used to march round the villages carrying festive bunches. Nor are such usages unattested in ancient times. At the beginning of spring, it was customary in ancient Greece for children to make the rounds of the houses—in the manner of modern carol singers—bearing a leafy bough and chanting an appropriate ditty; while the carrying of wands (*thyrsoi*) wreathed with fresh leaves and topped with pine cones was a prominent feature of the winter festival of Dionysus. Moreover, on a Cretan seal dating from the 2nd millennium B.C.E., suppliants of a female deity are portrayed bearing flowering wands; while the prophet Ezekiel, satirizing the pagan "abominations" performed in Jerusalem during high sum-

*All verse renderings in this article are by the author.

† The name *lulab* (from a verbal root meaning "to blossom") is post-Biblical. So, too, is the identification of the fruit with the Palestinian citron (*ethrog*) and of the "foliage of leafy trees" with the broad-leafed myrtle.

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mer, observes significantly (7:10): *"The rod has blossomed*—arrogance has flowered."

In Jewish tradition, however, the festive bunch has perforce to be invested with a historical as well as seasonal significance. This is accomplished in a highly ingenious manner. As a memorial of the circuits which the priests used to make around the altar on the Feast of Booths, a special feature of the traditional morning services is that congregants parade around the synagogue in solemn procession, each carrying a lulab in his right hand.* The ceremony is accompanied by the chanting of *hoshanoth*—that is, of poetic litanies punctuated by the refrain *Hosanna* (O save us!). These recitals are now associated specifically with incidents in the lives and careers of the patriarchs and of other ancestral worthies.

On the first day, God is invoked to remember all those incidents which had involved the number one, e.g. the fact that Abraham had been the *one* true believer in his generation; that Isaac had been delivered from sacrifice by the substitution of *"one* ram caught in a thicket" (Gen. 22:13); that Moses had transmitted to Israel the *one* true Law. On the second day, reference is made to Abraham's journey to Mount Moriah in the company of *two* servants (Gen. 22:3); to Isaac's having been the ancestor of *two* great nations; to Jacob's having acquired the parental blessing by dressing *two* kids for his aged father (Gen. 27:9); and to Moses' having brought down from Sinai *two* tables of stone. On the third day, the litany alludes to the *three* angels Abraham entertained (Gen. 18:2); to Isaac's having gone to Mount Moriah on the *third* day (Gen. 22:4); to Moses' having formed a triad with Aaron and Miriam; and to his having divided the people into the *threefold* division of priests, Levites, and Israelites.

Dexterously, and sometimes even tortuously, the same scheme is carried through for the remaining days of the festival. On the seventh day, for example, when seven circuits are made, not only do these commemorate the seven worthies, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, Phineas and David, but they also serve to call to mind the first seven days of the world; the seven lambs set apart by Abraham in his covenant with Abimelech (Gen. 21: 28-30); the seven wells of Beersheba dug by the servants of Isaac (Gen. 26:33); the seven years of famine endured by Jacob; and the seven-day festivals ordained by Moses.

Thus, although in itself it is not so readily capable of historicization as is the succah, the lulab is none the less securely wedded to the historical interpretation of the festival.

WHEN the Jewish religion came to be detached from its Palestinian matrix and setting, the seasonal character of the festivals tended largely to suffer eclipse. In the case of Succoth, this involved the abrogation of two particularly interesting ceremonies, neither of which is actually prescribed in the Bible but both of which were popularly observed in the days of the Second Temple and are fully described in the Mishnah. These ceremonies went back to that more primitive phase of the festival in which the ritual had a distinctly *functional* character and was designed to achieve the annual regeneration of nature by means of concerted and coordinated human effort.

The first was the Ceremony of Pouring Water. Every day, we are told, a golden flagon was filled from the pool of Siloam and carried to the Temple in gay procession. Delivered to the officiating priest, it was then poured into a silver container the spout of which was trained upon the altar.

It is generally agreed that this ceremony was originally a piece of sympathetic magic designed to promote rainfall, and that it hangs together with the fact that the autumnal festival presaged the advent of the rainy season; as the Mishnah puts it, "On the Feast of Booths mankind is judged in respect of water." Similar rites are abundantly attested in other parts of the world. Lucian of Samosata, for instance, writing in the 3rd century C.E., records an analogous

*The procession is omitted on the Sabbath, because it is not lawful to carry the lulab on that day.

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practice performed twice yearly in the pagan temple at Hierapolis, Syria; while at Ispahan, in Iran, there is (or was) an annual ceremony of rain-making which consisted in pouring water on the ground; and in many parts of modern Palestine, rogations for rain, accompanied by similar aspersions and by torchlight processions, are a common folk usage in early spring. Interesting also is a more remote parallel from the Mara tribe of North Australia: in time of drought, the local magician besprinkles himself with water and scatters drops of it on the earth; this, it is believed, will induce rainfall.

All that now remains of the ancient rite is the custom of offering special prayers for rain on the eighth day of the festival. These prayers, however, have been thoroughly integrated with the historical aspect of the celebration. The rain is besought in the name of such ancestral heroes as Abraham, Isaac, and Moses, and God is invoked to remember all those moments of their careers in which water played a part. The following lines from a medieval poem embodied in the Ashkenazic liturgy illustrate the pattern:

Remember him whose heart outflowed to Thee
Like water unto whom Thy blessing came
That he should thrive and flourish like a tree
Beside a stream; whom Thou didst save from flame
And water, that his offspring might abide
Like seed which grows the running brooks beside.

Remember him whose birth was heralded
By angels, when his father washed their feet
With water, who his blood would fain have shed*
Like water;† whom his servitors did greet
With tales of water found where none before
Had e'er been sighted in the days of yore.‡
Remember him who from the river deep
Was drawn; of whom the seven maidens said:
"Water he drew for us and gave our sheep
To drink"§ who through the arid desert led
Thy people and, himself for this accurs'd,
Struck water from the rock to slake their thirst.

Nevertheless, the continuing significance of the ceremony is not overlooked, for the poem concludes:

Remember them for whom Thou didst divide
The sea, and sweet the bitter waters make;‖
Whose children's children, beaten and decried,
Pour out their blood like water for Thy sake!
Turn Thou to us, O Lord, and make us whole;
For lo, great waters swirl about our soul!

THE other "functional" ceremony which has now fallen into disuse is that anciently known as the Rejoicing at the Beth Ha-Shoebah.¶ On the evening of the first day, says the Mishnah, men repaired to the precincts of the Temple and lit huge candlesticks in the Court of the Women, the blaze being visible from every courtyard in Jerusalem. "Men of piety and good works" danced in front of them, waving burning torches, while a throng of Levites, standing on the fifteen steps which divided the Court of the Women from that of the Israelites, furnished accompanying music. At the Ni-

*Compare Gen. 18:1-4.

†I.e., when he was destined for sacrifice on Mount Moriah (Gen. 22).

‡Compare Gen. 26:19-22, 32.

§I.e., the seven daughters of Ruel (or Jethro); compare Ex. 2:16-18.

‖Compare Ex. 15:22-25.

¶The meaning of this term is disputed. By normal Hebrew usage, it should denote "the place of the drawing of water," but since there is nothing in the ceremony which involves the drawing of water, it has been supposed that it is a corruption of some similar term which referred to the kindling of firebrands. However, if we assume that the ceremony was originally preserved in small towns and villages up and down the country, the name would be readily explicable from the fact that "the place of the drawing of water" usually served as the local piazza or place of concourse.

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canor Gate stood priests, holding trumpets. At cockcrow, they ascended the steps and sounded a series of prolonged and quavering blasts. When they reached the gate which leads out to the east, they turned their faces westward, in the direction of the Temple building, and cried: "Our forefathers, when they were in this place, turned their backs on the Temple of the Lord and their faces toward [the rising sun in] the east [cf. Ezek. 8:16]; but we—our eyes are turned toward the Lord."

This, too, was originally a magical rite, its purpose being to rekindle the decadent sun at the time of the autumnal equinox and to hail it when it rose at dawn. Such a ceremony is likewise recorded by Lucian, and a Christianized survival of it may be recognized in the Festival of the Cross (*Maskal*) still observed by the Ethiopian Church on September 26. Elsewhere, however, it is usually combined with the idea of burning up all evil and noxious influence at the start of the year. Thus, at Fez and among the Berber-speaking tribes of Morocco, it is customary to light bonfires on the rooftops on the festival of 'Ashura, the Mohammedan New Year, and for children and unmarried men to leap over the flames the while they cry: "We have shaken out over thee, O bonfire, the fleas and lice and sickness both physical and moral!" The same custom obtains also in Tunis. Analogously, too, an ancient Babylonian text which described the ceremonies of the New Year festival refers to the custom of tossing firebrands in the air; while Ovid tells us that the Romans leaped over fires at the beginning of the year. To this day, bonfires are a standard feature of Halloween ceremonies in most parts of Europe, and Halloween was, of course, the eve of the ancient New Year.

NO TRACE of this ceremony remains in the modern Jewish liturgy. On the other hand, there is one ancient "functional" rite which has indeed survived, though so different a meaning is now read into it that its original purport can no longer be recognized. This is the custom of "beating *hoshanoth*"—that is, of taking extra twigs of willow and beating off their leaves upon the lectern during the recital of the Hosanna litanies on the seventh day. The conventional explanation of this practice is that it symbolizes the frailty of human lives, which fade and fall "thick as autumnal leaves which strew the brooks in Vallombrosa." The truth is, however, that it harks back to a primitive and fairly universal belief that the willow is a symbol of fertility and to the consequent custom of beating people with branches of that tree in order to induce potency and increase. Throughout Europe, for example, "Easter smacks," administered in this fashion, are a characteristic feature of the great spring festival. Thus, in Croatia, those who attend church on this occasion "beat health" into one another with rods of willow, while in several parts of Germany and Austria the same practice obtains on St. Stephen's Day (December 26) or on Holy Innocents' Day (December 28); and in Russia it is (or was) common on Palm Sunday. In ancient Greek ritual, human scapegoats were beaten, at the major seasonal festival, with squills of willow or *agnus castus* in order, at one and the same time, to beat *out* sterility and beat *in* fecundity. Nor, indeed, was this beating always confined to human beings; the poet Theocritus informs us that in times of drought the youths of Arcadia used to smite the statue of the god Pan.

THUS, as in all festivals everywhere, so too in that of Succoth, the past and present "blend and blur"; and those who live in a modern age need not suppose that a primitive mode of expression necessarily implies a primitive concept. As the Bible puts it, the festivals are "for *all* generations." What the Sabbath Hymn of Glory says of God Himself may be said with equal truth of His people and its traditional institutions:

In many shapes do men Thine image frame;
Through all their visions Thou art yet the same.

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HOW END THE PANIC IN RADIO-TV?

The Demagogic Half-Truth vs. the "Liberal" Half-Lie

LOUIS BERG

THE air waves have been jittery since the appearance in 1950 of a paper-bound booklet, *Red Channels*, a "Report of Communist Influence in Radio and Television," published by three former FBI men, John G. Keenan, Theodore G. Kirkpatrick, and Kenneth M. Bierly, publishers also of the anti-Communist weekly *Counterattack* (two of the three have since resigned). *Red Channels* names 151 broadcasting people as having lent themselves—knowingly or unknowingly—to Communist fronts and causes, and lists their alleged affiliations. This is not the only listing of its kind, but it is the one that has received the most publicity and attracted the most attention, and it has been made the basis, people say, for a general blacklist in the industry against the people named, with the result that prominent actors, directors, writers, and even producers named in it have lost jobs, some have been utterly ruined, and others are in virtual hiding—or so it is alleged.

The known facts are few. Actually there are only two acknowledged instances of people who have been barred from radio and television because of their listings in *Red Channels*. In the fall of 1950, Jean Muir, the former movie star, was dropped from the "Aldrich Family" program under circumstances leaving little doubt that protests from self-appointed guardians of the American way of life, aroused by the fact that she was named in *Red Channels*, were responsible. Miss Muir fought back vigorously, earnestly denied Communist ties or sympathies, and was defended by influential and even conservative friends. Nevertheless, she is still unemployed and apparently unemployable.

Some time later, when the echoes of her case had all but died and it was felt that her fight had at least served the purpose of making another such case impossible, the veteran actor Philip Loeb was dropped from the TV version of the Mollie Goldberg serial—this over the protests of the producer and star, Mrs. Gertrude Berg. Mr. Loeb was listed in *Red Channels* as having belonged to, or sponsored, fourteen allegedly subversive organizations. He has not been employed on radio or television since.

Even more recently James Wechsler, anti-Communist editor of the New York *Post*, was dropped as panelist on the "Starring the Editors" program, following disclosure of what he had never tried to keep secret—his

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EVERY schoolboy has by now heard of the "reign of terror" which supposedly makes it impossible for anyone who was ever under suspicion of associating with any Communist front organization to obtain work in American radio and television. Publication by the American Civil Liberties Union of Merle Miller's report on the situation, *The Judges and the Judged* (Doubleday), has started a new round of charges and counter-charges, with the McCarran Committee contributing its bit in the form of a shotgun blast against twenty members of the industry, without discrimination as to degree of innocence or culpability; more names are promised when the hearings resume. In the meantime, all proposals for remedying the situation remain blocked. LOUIS BERG here reviews the facts in this unhappy situation and offers a solution which he believes should satisfy the demands of justice and moderation. Mr. Berg, film and TV editor of the national weekly *This Week*, is respected as one of the fairest and most knowledgeable writers in the entertainment world, with two decades of professional experience in various branches behind him, and an even longer record of concern with civil liberties and political justice. He is a Virginian who has lived in New York for over thirty years. The opinions expressed here, like those of other writers in these pages, should not be taken as official views either of this magazine or of its sponsors.

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affiliation many years ago with the Young Communist League. But Mr. Wechsler was not listed in *Red Channels,* and he was reinstated on the program.

The absence of publicized *causes celebres* is no proof, to be sure, that a blacklist does not operate. The repercussions in the Muir and Loeb cases were loud and the publicity highly disagreeable to the sponsors and networks involved—to say nothing of the fact that it cost his employers $40,000 to buy up Mr. Loeb's unexpired contract. The man who sells soap or toothpaste or krumbly krispies on the air is not in business to offend potential customers, right, left, or crooked. Television contracts, in particular, are of short duration—how much simpler not to renew; not to hire in the present or immediate future anyone who might be considered "controversial," i.e., listed in *Red Channels.* The sponsor need not be motivated in this by any particular desire to rid the industry of Communist influence. He is not concerned necessarily with the truth or falsity of the charges in *Red Channels.* He is simply playing it safe.

On the other hand, rejection of a performer who has been listed in *Red Channels* is not proof positive of a blacklist either. Even if a statistical study should show—and I think it would—that the 151 listees in *Red Channels* are not getting the work they used to, or getting a good deal less work, blacklisting would still not be established as the primary cause. Other factors would have to be taken into account. Consider the plight of those idols of yesteryear—Kukla, Fran and Ollie, Garry Moore, Faye Emerson, etc., etc. None is listed in *Red Channels* and all are having sponsor trouble. Had these, and other, diminished or vanished figures in TV been politically minded, how easy it would be to blame their fall from grace on a political blacklist—and how misleading!

WHATEVER the true facts, however, most people in the industry seem to believe that a blacklist exists. Their panic is genuine, even if it sometimes seems disproportionate. The threats of the right, the alarmist warnings of the left, have had their fullest effects in radio and TV. The wildest rumor is accepted as gospel truth; the faintest "boo" makes people run for their lives. Unquestionably panic has served to aggravate a condition that was not healthy to begin with.

In this atmosphere of unreasoning terror, it is not easy to ascertain the truth. People in radio and TV flee the simplest questions, or give the wildest and most contradictory answers. Who is using the blacklist—sponsor, network, advertising agency? Everybody or nobody? Who are the victims? Are they Communists, conspirators of the deepest dye, or innocent victims of perhaps misplaced generosity—lovers of peace, justice, and folk music? How great is the damage? Not even the best-informed people in the industry—the heads of the protective trade unions, the responsible representatives of management, the legal minds engaged in untangling the many embarrassments caused by the controversy—give you plain, straight answers. And yet, surely, these are the questions that must be answered if our concern for civil liberties and our sympathy for the victims of injustice are to take any practical form.

Accordingly, a searching examination by sober minds unconnected with the industry, able to give us the benefit of calm appraisal and unswayed judgment, would seem indicated. Certainly nothing could be more welcome or useful. It was admirable of the American Civil Liberties Union to have undertaken such a survey, even on its own initiative. It was a piece of bad luck, in my opinion, that the job was assigned to Merle Miller, novelist and ACLU Board member, unfitted, as it turned out (whatever his other virtues), temperamentally and emotionally for such a task.

MR. MILLER'S report to the ACLU has been published in book form under the title *The Judges and the Judged.* It has been enthusiastically received in orthodox liberal circles, and some of our leading liberals have endorsed it. It bears also the unqualified endorsement of the chairman of the ACLU Board of Directors, Mr. Ernest Angell.

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Robert E. Sherwood, too, contributes a foreword that embarrasses one for his reputation. "This book tells with accuracy and objectivity a factual story," says Mr. Sherwood. But not a word of this survives a careful examination of the book itself.

The Judges and the Judged can serve only to spread the rumors of a blacklist in radio-TV: it does absolutely nothing to establish the facts. It is sleazy reporting altogether, showing every sign of hasty or careless assemblage; it is a hodge-podge of so-called data consisting of clippings, jottings, quotes from people whose identity is never revealed, and dubious testimony in general, accepted in evidence without any signs of check or balance. More serious than this general sloppiness are the indications that Mr. Miller embarked on his inquiry with his mind made up well in advance. This anxiety to prove a case has led to serious distortions of fact.

A fellow Board member, Mr. Merlyn Pitzele, has taken him seriously and successfully to task for his errors in a review of the book in the *New Leader* (May 12) and in an exchange of letters between himself and Mr. Miller that followed in the same magazine (June 16). Mr. Miller was forced to acknowledge "errors in arithmetic"*—curiously, they are all in one direction; it is always the publishers of *Red Channels* and their supporters who are short-changed.

The best one can say for Mr. Miller in this respect is that terror is contagious, and he seems to have succumbed to the panic in the industry. In explanation of the anonymity of his sources he says: "The investigator felt that mentioning any name . . . no matter how favorable the context, might affect a livelihood now or in the future. With a few exceptions (public figures like Philip Murray, Trygve Lie, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, etc.) the names of those condemned in *Counterattack* and listed in *Red Channels* are not repeated here." Having said this, however, he repeats no less than twenty of the names mentioned in *Red Channels*—Jean Muir and Philip Loeb, of course, and also Gypsy Rose Lee, Tom Glazer, The Weavers, Fredric March and Florence Eldridge, Hazel Scott, Alfred Drake, Judy Holliday, Meg Mundy, Ireene Wicker, Josh White, Selena Royle, Joe Julian, and others (none really a public figure like Mrs. Roosevelt or Trygve Lie)—leaving us to brood over the possible damage his absent-mindedness has done to their careers and livelihoods.

But was it absent-mindedness? On close scrutiny these lapses from good intention seem to be part of a pattern. With some exceptions, where there are names, there is no testimony; and where there is testimony there are no names. It is fair to state that his *key* witnesses are nameless, which means that their crucial testimony cannot be checked.

Thus Mr. Miller offers in evidence the statements of "A once prosperous television writer, a well-known radio and Broadway actress, a man who until recently was one of the most successful radio-television producers, a well-known comedian," etc., etc., and it speaks triumphantly for his formula that they all have the same tale to tell, as if speaking in concert, of desolation and doom. An "influential and vigorously anti-Communist lawyer, a number of whose clients are in the radio and television field," strikes the keynote: "Everyone of them [the 151 listees] has been affected. A few don't even know it, but they've all lost jobs. A majority have lost a great many jobs, and a good-sized minority just aren't working at their professions any more."

This is a strong statement, and even Mr. Miller seems to feel that it could stand toning down. "A few," he admits grudgingly, "most of them among the less prominent listees, continue to work, sometimes anonymously, often with credit, perhaps because their names are not well known to the general public." (Among the people listed in

*Thus, Mr. Miller had written that "one actor's most recent listing was 1938; many had no listing after 1941; a sizeable minority, none after 1945." Mr. Pitzele pointed out that every name had a listing after 1938, only 3 had none after 1941, and 2 more none after 1945. The "sizeable minority" with no listing after 1945 amounts to 5 out of 151.

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Red Channels who continue to work, "with credit, perhaps because their names are not well known," are Abe Burrows, Ben Grauer, Henry Morgan.)

More than our curiosity is aroused by the anonymity of the key witnesses. We have questions to ask them, questions raised by their own testimony. What, for example, was the Hooper rating of the "Well-Known Comedian" when he was dropped from the air—a listing no less important than *Red Channels* in determining who is to be retained and who let go in radio and television?

We would particularly like to check upon the amplification that Mr. Miller gratuitously supplies for the statement of the unidentified lawyer: "a former network executive has 'for reasons not unconnected with that publication [*Red Channels*]' resigned and turned to another field for his employment. A long-time producer has become a magazine columnist. A once successful script writer is 'trying my hand' at magazine fiction; he has yet to make a sale. Another listee has gone to the West Coast as a scenario writer and states 'I am doing all right in the movies, now, until, I suppose, the House Committee [on Un-American Activities] subpoenas me.' Several actors and actresses who once depended on their income from radio and television to supplement the always unpredictable amounts earned in the theater have, one reports, 'given up sitting by the phone any more.' One has become a part-time sales clerk in a Manhattan department store; a second actress decided 'I'd better get married, that's one way of being sure to eat.' She did. A third recently opened in a play 'which looks as if it'll run forever, or six months anyway, so right now I don't have to worry. But next year?'"

Surely we have the right to ask for stronger examples than these of people driven out of the profession by the blacklist. Show business is ever precarious, and quite a few people in it, and not in *Red Channels,* have given up sitting by the phone. The listee who has gone to the West Coast is not exactly out of the profession; he has merely transferred to the most remunerative branch of it. The same might be said of the actress who is in a play that "promises to run forever." How many actresses not in *Red Channels* would hesitate to trade places with her? And what shall we say of the actress who so blandly grabbed a husband for a meal ticket? Is she the first to trade the chancy rouge pots of the theater for the more regular fleshpots of marriage?

Was anything ever stranger than Mr. Miller's crusade—his efforts to remedy injustices perpetrated by unnamed agencies on individuals who are also nameless?

WE MIGHT have to acknowledge the fears of some of the witnesses, even if we cannot share them. Let sleeping dogs lie, would seem to be their motto—why put the baying hounds on the trail again? But this is precisely what Mr. Miller's book is calculated to do—and has done. Besides evoking a heated reiteration of old accusations and counter-accusations, it has stirred the publishers of *Red Channels* to fresh activity; if only to answer Mr. Miller's attack on them, they must try to prove that their charges were justified, that their booklet was not issued without reason, that a danger exists, and that they performed a public service in pointing it out.

Moreover, the ACLU itself did not intend to rest with surveying the situation. On the basis of Mr. Miller's report, says the introduction, the ACLU "is urging the Federal Communications Commission to demand that those licensees (stations and networks) ... refrain from making use of any blacklist of radio-television performers, and from dealing with anyone who uses such a blacklist." The petition has since been submitted to and twice denied by the FCC. Had it been entertained, however, who would doubt that the FCC would have been more finicky than Mr. Miller in the matter of evidence? It might have even demanded names and cases—particularly names.

I have placed much stress on Mr. Miller's insistence on the anonymity of his witnesses, not only because I think it renders their testimony, and therefore his whole book, invalid, but because I seem to sense in it a clumsy

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and somewhat futile extension of the general hush-hush defense set up in liberal circles when the embarrassing question arises of Communist influence on various movements and causes. Inquiry into the backgrounds and associations of those prominent in certain movements—certainly useful and necessary in determining the extent and method of Communist infiltration—is condemned in itself as an act of "witch-hunting," for to inquire, it is argued, is to embarrass, and to name, in these heated times, is to condemn. By now it is amply clear that this defense, whatever the motives behind it, has protected no one from baseless charges, or damage to his reputation and livelihood. It has served only to sabotage all efforts, governmental or private, to elicit the genuine facts, and has maintained and spread the whole atmosphere of suspicion and conspiracy that has bedeviled this problem from the beginning. It has helped make a national figure of the notorious Senator McCarthy. It has duped many respectable and patriotic citizens. It has been used to shield the guilty rather than to protect the innocent. Nor has it, as I have said, diminished by one little whit the voice of wholesale slander.

That innocent people were involved—and sometimes even at the very top—in the organizations and movements used as fronts by the Communists cannot be doubted. The Communist game is one of the oldest flim-flams, and has served as the basis for some of the corniest of "B" movie plots. A group of con men come to a small town; they have a high-sounding promotion scheme that they claim will benefit the whole community. Naturally, they first approach the respected citizens of the community, and seek to involve them as much as possible in their project, in order through them to be able to fleece the farmers, the workingmen, and the widow ladies. Moved by vanity a little—for their names are to head the project—as well as civic interest, and with amazing gullibility, these respected citizens lend their names and more. All goes swimmingly and the value of the phony stock soars in the community, until certain suspicions are aroused. Low fellows brand the whole project for the swindle it is, and accuse the respected citizens of complicity in it. Feeling runs high. Factions form. Some defend, some attack the leading citizens—all without the best knowledge of the facts. The leading citizens are in a pickle. They, themselves, have begun to suspect the truth. Some were taken in by others, but cannot expose these now without exposing themselves. They stall, they delay, they deny, they fumble, they mumble. Meanwhile, like as not, in the confusion the professional con men make their getaway, and the respected citizens are left holding the bag.

Into all this it is not difficult to fit Mr. Miller. He's the trusting soul, say the editor of the local newspaper, who writes indignant editorials calling for restraint, for trust, for patience, who denounces the mob and defends the leading citizens. Blinded by his political antipathy to the attackers, angry over the excesses of these hotheaded elements, the editor distorts the evidence, minimizes the swindle, and tries to divert the wrath of the community from the original swindlers to those who protest the swindle.

A man so hell-bent on protecting his own side is not the man to bring in an unbiased report. He will inquire only into the irresponsibility of the hotheads, he will close his eyes to the derelictions of the influential citizens, permitting none of them to be considered anything but innocent. It might be too much to ask him to separate the sheep from the goats, but need he pretend that all are sheep, even when the horns show?

If in some circles the mere mention of a name in *Red Channels* is enough to damn a person for all eternity, it is hardly less true that for Mr. Miller, and for people like him, it is almost an accolade, proof positive of non-Communism, of virtue and of superlative talent besides. The listees are mentioned only in praise, either by themselves or by others. None will admit Communist sympathies—not even in the security of his anonymity.

Mr. Miller will not even admit the possibility of the culpability of any listee; blanket accusation is opposed by blanket whitewash-

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ing. Prove it, he says, and in the same breath: Don't you dare try. Or, as he puts it: "Do 41 affiliations suffice? Will a dozen do? Who is to say? Who is to judge?"

Well, for many of us 41 affiliations would suffice, in the absence of disproof—or two affiliations, for that matter, of a certain kind. But Mr. Miller's question is rhetorical. He casts his doubts and runs.

But this will not do. The question raised in *Red Channels* is not of membership in the Communist party, which, Mr. Miller observes unnecessarily, none can prove except maybe the FBI. The question is one of *collaboration* with the Communists, which *can* be established by the *public activities* of the suspected persons. There is no exact dividing line between the foolish innocents and the guilty, but neither is there one between sanity and insanity. Nevertheless, society may sometimes find it necessary to draw the line. Who is to judge, and how the judgment is to be arrived at, are real questions at the present time, and are not to be asked rhetorically. They will continue to be asked by our society, you can depend on it, until some straight answer is given.

MR. MILLER'S bias is nowhere more clearly displayed than in the chapter entitled "The Other Side of the Coin." There have also been rumors, in the entertainment world, of a second blacklist on radio and television, operated by Communist sympathizers in the industry and directed against anti-Communists. Mr. Miller and the ACLU come out strongly in principle against both types of blacklist, and Mr. Miller was under instructions from the ACLU to investigate both, which he did.

But with how much zeal in the case of the one, and how indifferently in that of the other!*

The general conclusion that he reports to the ACLU is that "in the several weeks of the investigation that was concerned with this [the blacklisting of anti-Communists] aspect of the whole problem, not a single instance of proof was uncovered. . . . Of course, if there is a Communist blacklist, it, like the party itself, operates in secret." One cannot refrain from observing that Mr. Miller is probably the last man in the world to try to penetrate *this* secrecy. But it is more relevant to point out that there is not a particle of difference in the kind of testimony Mr. Miller accepts as proof of an anti-Communist blacklist and that which he rejects as proof of a Communist blacklist. (After all, the networks keep their blacklist secret, too, if there is one.) He quotes, for example, the statement of an anti-Communist "soap opera" actor: "I've a strong feeling that I've lost out all along the line in radio and television because I'm a strong anti-Communist, but certainly I couldn't prove it in a court of law"—and he finds this unconvincing. And so it is, certainly. But is it any weaker than the statement of "The poet, playwright and television writer whose name was listed in *Red Channels* and sometime earlier was denounced in *Counterattack* as a 'party-liner'": "I'll admit the whole thing could be coincidence, but it's awful strange"? Aside from the higher billing Mr. Miller gives his poet, why should one testimony carry more weight than the other?

To summarize, Mr. Miller's report would seem to be a sort of *Red Channels* in reverse. It opposes guilt by association with innocence by association, refusing to admit evidence pointing to guilt as *Red Channels* refuses to admit evidence pointing to innocence. Neither tells the whole story; Mr. Miller's book is no more a fair report on the blacklist in radio and TV than *Red Channels* is a proper report on Communist influence in the industry.

TO SAY all these things about Mr. Miller's book is not to deny, however, that a situation exists in radio and television that distresses decent people. Miss Muir remains unemployed and apparently unemployable, as do some other innocent or innocuous people. This is a shameful fact.

*The reader is referred again to Mr. Pitzele's exchange of letters with Mr. Miller in the *New Leader* of June 16 for some interesting documentation of this point.

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It is our conviction that panic—in some instances deliberately fostered by the "left"—is to blame rather than deliberate policy; we still have no proof that there is a deliberate and concerted effort on the part of sponsors and networks to blacklist the people named in *Red Channels*. Much of the fault seems to lie on a lower level; indeed, largely responsible may be people who are loudest in bemoaning the blacklist, and who testify most eagerly to its existence.

"You see this list? . . . I don't bother suggesting them any more," says a "leading actor and writer's agent," one of Mr. Miller's chosen witnesses.

"Nobody has to tell me not to use anybody listed in *Red Channels* if I can help it; I just know not to," says "an account executive in one of the half-dozen largest advertising agencies."

"Look at the spot I'm in," says a "television producer." "All these actors, the old stand-bys. You want to use them; they are the best you can get; the parts are practically written for them, but you can't. . . . Just look at that list. And there's nothing you can do about it."

Well, the retort springs naturally to the lips: you could protest! You could even resign. People have been known to give up jobs, both for reasons of principle or because of intolerable professional conditions. It is not to Mr. Miller's credit that he directs none of his anger at these craven underlings for their self-implicating testimony, but rather seems to lend a sympathetic ear to their alleged plight.

How misplaced this sympathy may be is underlined by the fact, as we learn, that the strongest resistance to blacklisting has come from conservative sponsors—U.S. Steel, for example—who cannot be accused of liberal or leftist sympathies, but who prefer to make their own judgments and refuse to be dictated to by irresponsible outsiders. The Celanese Corporation, accused in Mr. Sherwood's impassioned foreword to *The Judges and the Judged* of furnishing "an ugly demonstration of the conditions . . . described and documented," settled the dispute in question—with playwright Elmer Rice—amicably, so that the publishers were forced embarrassingly to append a footnote to his foreword praising the company "for creating a precedent by repudiating blacklisting." Procter and Gamble, a huge sponsor of radio and TV shows, plans similarly to pursue, we are informed, a fair-minded and independent course.

For some months now representatives of management have been meeting with the heads of the entertainment trade unions in an effort to end the present confused situation—intolerable to the so-called "judges" as well as to the "judged." That nothing has so far come of these meetings is chiefly due to disagreement among leaders of the entertainment unions themselves rather than to management. All the plans proposed envision an impartial board of inquiry, headed by people of acknowledged integrity and liberal views. The minimal objective sought is to give people who may be unjustly accused an opportunity to be heard, to be cleared, to be returned to a "non-controversial" status, with immediate benefit to some if not to all. Management has agreed to stand by the findings of such a board against irresponsible pressures from the outside. And with powerful trade unions like the American Federation of Radio Artists and Actors' Equity supporting such a proposal, who can doubt its effectiveness?

But the unions have not been able to get accord on the plan; the profession remains split, with both the "right" and the "left" against it, and only a small group of middle-of-the-road moderates actively pushing its adoption. The "right" apparently thinks the suggested medicine not strong enough; the "liberals" argue, in their panic, that to free some of the listees of the charges against them would be to impute guilt to others who might be equally innocent but less successful in demonstrating their innocence.

Mr. Miller, too, objects to the industry proposals, and on even purer grounds. Indeed, his position in *The Judges and the Judged*, when finally—on page 215—he gets

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around to presenting it, is so extreme as to make his report seem an act of supererogation. For the accuracy of the *Red Channels* listings, and the question of whether or not a blacklist is used in radio and television, is now seen to be irrelevant and immaterial.

"The basic question," he says, "is whether in a free society employers in radio or television or any other industry not declared 'sensitive' do in fact have 'the right and duty to consider the political ideologies'—past *or present*—of those they hire. It is whether a network or an independent station, or, for that matter, a factory manufacturing M-1 rifles, is upholding or traducing the democratic tradition by requiring its employees to sign a 'loyalty' statement or 'oath.' It is whether any non-governmental employer has the right to decide who among his employees is a good American and who is not. It is whether a man's political beliefs are now to determine if he can continue to work at his chosen profession. It is whether a man's political beliefs are no longer to be considered a private matter." (Italics mine.)

This, if it means anything at all, would make the Rockefellers out to be enemies of freedom if they refused to hire Earl Browder, a qualified bookkeeper, as their accountant because of their fear that his political views might affect his double-entries. It is a far-reaching argument, indeed, and it raises some hard questions which need to be answered. How does Mr. Miller stand on the house-cleaning operations of the CIO, which, though not a government agency, rid itself of Communists (and their close collaborators) who were in positions of influence and power? And what did Mr. Miller himself think he was doing, a few years ago, when he helped throw the Communists out of their posts in the American Veterans Committee? And one is also provoked to ask why the ACLU itself bars Communists from its various boards—after all, who declared *it* to be a "sensitive" industry? And how could all this house-cleaning have been accomplished without inquiry and exposure, to the detriment of the people exposed?

Mr. Miller is apparently opposed to all inquiry into a man's political beliefs—no matter how dangerous these beliefs may be. If we follow him, he is opposed even to investigations conducted by organizations like the Anti-Defamation League or the American Jewish Committee into the secret membership of an organization like the Ku Klux Klan, on the grounds that the disclosures would be calculated to prejudice Jewish and Catholic employers.

THE implications of such a position carry far. Into Germany for example, where the liberal German youth (see "German Students Seek 'Peace with the Jews'" in COMMENTARY, August 1952) is protesting the exhibition of movies—even though they are "shmaltzy" love stories free of political content—directed by Veit Harlan, who made pictures for Goebbels. And if Mr. Miller's position is to be maintained, indeed why may not Nazi professors teach again in German universities? And in American ones, too, for that matter?

We reject this as utter nonsense, to be sure. It is intolerable that the rascals who shared the guilt of Buchenwald should be permitted to make too handsome a living in the public eye. A free society may have to tolerate its enemies, but it is not called upon to reward them. And is the present less vivid to the mind's eye than the past, and have we not the slave camps of Russia and the war in Korea to jog our sensibilities?

More is involved here than the simple right of a man to hold a job and "an unpopular opinion" at the same time. A church board may be permitted to reject a Communist as a minister of the Gospel, whatever his training in theological seminaries. Nor must a Communist, in all reason, be received on the staff of a university dedicated to the principle of academic freedom; we do not hire a bank robber to guard the money in the bank, the wolf to watch over the sheepfold. We have the example of Dr. Gene Weltfish, a Columbia instructor in anthropology, who in a public statement parroted the Communist charges of germ warfare in Korea. She and a Dr. James Endicott, for-

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merly a missionary of the United Church of Canada in China, acted in concert, if the press reported correctly, to give a semblance of school and church support to this organized slander. And who would have listened to them if not for the jobs they held? We are not greatly disturbed for civil liberties to learn that Dr. Endicott was removed from his missionary post because of his association with the Chinese Reds, nor would we think it a violation of academic freedom if Dr. Weltfish lost her job at Columbia. They abused their respected positions and functions, not to speak of exposing their lack of intellectual competence for the high educative positions they hold. These were no simple preacher and teacher, but true partisan fighters hiding ideological weapons under their clerical and academic robes.

How does this apply to the situation in radio and television? To be sure, some of the jobs held by the listees seem harmless enough, even in so vital a medium of communication and culture. Many of the jobs, however, do not fall into the harmless category, by any standards. "The famous radio and television producer now not working" was no simple job-holder. At the very least, he held the right to hire and fire. And if it could be established that he was under Communist domination, who would argue that he had used his discretion solely in the interests of his programs and his employers?

It is true that an actor in television can do less harm than a spy in an atom plant, that a script writer cannot convey direct Communist propaganda to the screen, that a Communist director may not take too many liberties with the script assigned to him. Yet it was with very good reason that the Communist party concentrated such fierce attention in the past decade on the entertainment industries, and so energetically colonized them. What other field—short of government—confers on the job-holder such glamor and prestige, with the privilege of mingling with the high and mighty?

The situation in radio and television cannot be viewed narrowly or merely professionally; it must be viewed against the larger background of the national and international situation. In the cold war, the question of who commands a public forum looms no less large than the possession of air bases and planes in Korea. Many citizens have been troubled, angered, alarmed, by the Communist occupation in this country, until recently, of vantage points in schools and universities, in newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, in trade unions and voluntary organizations for the good and welfare, to say nothing of government itself. The powerful influence wielded on key opinion-molders by the Institute of Pacific Relations serves to remind us that these fears were not entirely groundless.

If the danger in these fields seems to have diminished, if Communist influence has been rooted out of trade unions, out of schools and churches, out of publishing houses and magazines—out of government itself, for that matter—we can hardly thank the so-called civil libertarians, whose record is one of hampering inquiry and blocking protest except that aimed at protecting Communist-fronters from investigation and counteraction. Nor, to return to radio and television, can we forget the "liberal" protest over the firing of Johannes Steel, William Gailmor, and other news commentators, whose jobs were surely anything but harmless.

Small wonder, then, that the effective fight against Communist influence has been conducted by people too far to the right, by unscrupulous demagogues whose methods we rightly deplore and whose weapons may prove to be double-edged. We of the liberal faith have largely surrendered to them the fight against Communists in this country, which should have been the concern and the duty of every person interested in civil liberties. After all, has history known any such suppression of human freedom as the Communists have been able to accomplish, with their pattern of deceitful championship of civil rights and mendacious provocation on their way to power, and total suppression

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after? Need we detail the record from Russia through Czechoslovakia and the satellite states, down to the recent elimination of all liberties in China? Their strategy in this country is no different.

MR. MILLER and his supporters may peddle their doctrine of absolute civil libertarianism to their heart's content—this being a free country—but how many people at large will accept the thesis that Communists—unchallenged and unknown—should be permitted to infiltrate key positions in education, publishing, the communications industries, government itself?

It may well be that the basic problem is not what to do with the Communists. It is almost sufficient to expose these, for they fear exposure more than the direct punishments. They have amply demonstrated their willingness to go to jail rather than tell the truth. Our problem may be with the persistent fellow-travelers who can deny in good conscience that they are Communists, yet who stubbornly follow the party line. And what shall we do about people like Merle Miller, who are anti-Communist, but who help afford the Communists not only sanctuary but concealment?

What can we do save to plead with liberals to ignore the counsels of such misty-eyed people—lest the fight for freedom be lost indeed. It would be the greatest mistake to accept Mr. Miller and his like as true champions of civil liberties. They are no Amadises de Gaul certainly, but rather Don Quixotes. They display the same tendency to mistake windmills for giants—as witness Mr. Miller's 100-page tilting against *Red Channels*. It is well to keep in mind the episode in which the Knight of the Mournful Countenance sought to free certain unsavory characters from the toils of the law, under the mistaken impression and on their own testimony that they were only pranksters.

It should also be remembered that Don Quixote not only became quite dishonest in his efforts to maintain his dangerous delusions against the most overwhelming evidence to the contrary, but that he also tried to drown out with shouted arguments the voice of common sense.*

IN THE matter of radio and television, the voice of common sense would seem to be clear enough.

We must, first of all, acknowledge the facts. In the past decade, the temper, the atmosphere, the prevailing mode in entertainment circles was to an alarming extent pro-Communist. The policy of the United Front, the soft speeches of Earl Browder, the fact that we were Russia's ally in the war against Hitler, served to obscure for many people the true nature and the true purpose of the Communist party. So well entrenched did Communists and Communist collaborators become in the entertainment industry that for a while the quickest path to advancement in the theater, in Hollywood, in radio and television was that which ran unquestionably close to the Communist line.

Some who followed the line were simply following fashion, others pursued self-interest, a large number—I would like to believe—were betrayed by misty-eyed idealism, by a vague sense of guilt, by a quixotic sense of justice. We must forgive these fond, fool-

* At Mr. Pitzele's insistence, the Board of the ACLU appointed a special committee headed by chairman Ernest Angell to consider his charges against Mr. Miller's book. In a 3300-word report the committee found valid each of Mr. Pitzele's major specific charges (involving omission, serious and misleading inaccuracy, and distortion) and recommended their correction in future editions of the book. The report was approved by the Board, which also voted to leave the manner of its public release "to the discretion of the office." To this date, the report has not been released. Nor has it been made available to the reviewers of the book, most of whom were highly laudatory, or to the twenty-four liberals who at the solicitation of the ACLU lent their names to an endorsement of the book's accuracy and objectivity in a full-page ad in the New York *Times* book section. Nor has the ACLU's official endorsement been withdrawn; indeed the Board voted formally not to do so. Individuals inquiring about the report have been refused a copy, and given instead a prepared 100-word statement. One such inquirer characterized this statement to this writer as "vague, unspecific, and giving a distorted and therefore misleading account of the findings of the report."

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ish people, but we can hardly respect their opinions, or their knowledge of politics and world affairs even today. We are entitled to view them with some misgivings—"the fool returneth to his folly as a dog to his vomit," says the Bible.

However, to punish them is like whipping a dreamy child, and this writer has fought and will continue to fight punitive measures against them. It is an indispensable part of any decent or practical program that we declare an amnesty for such as these, at least as far as *past* sins are concerned. Let them be judged only by their *present or future* conduct. Also we should perhaps exempt from too close scrutiny people whose jobs are minor and whose influence is small —on the job or in the union.

The story must be different, however, with the party-liners and the hatchet men in the industry, whose viciousness and treachery went beyond the imagination, and some of whom still pursue party policy and the party line. The entertainment trade unions know them well, for the industry has had its share of trouble from them, and can testify that their strength is far from eliminated even today.

A fair-minded board of inquiry, such as has been proposed by management and trade union official alike, would first of all serve the function of getting the truly innocent and innocuous off the hook. It would have to weigh, by their *present* speeches and actions, the sincerity of those who were more deeply implicated in collaboration with the Communists but who have since avowed the error of their ways.

A core would remain of people within the industry suspected with some reason of still being Communists or Communist collaborators. Since the board of inquiry's function would be to absolve rather than to punish, it would have to ignore these people, leaving them to be defended by people like Merle Miller who believe in the fullest rights for the Communists, including apparently their right to keep their views concealed and to engage in secret conspiracy, and at the same time to remain unnoticed.

How effective such a plan could be, the example of Hollywood may illustrate, where of two hundred persons hit by shotgun charges of the American Legion and other bodies, all but twenty have been freed from suspicion or blame: this through the old-fashioned American prescription compounded of knowledge of the facts, free discussion, and open covenants openly arrived at. Such matters are best settled, our experience has taught us, not by reference to or through law, but by codes of practice arrived at through negotiation, compromise, and fair play, voluntarily adopted and voluntarily enforced.

Such a solution will not, nor need it, satisfy the civil libertarians, who are free to continue their campaign for absolute rights for all absolutely. Our concern must for the present be more narrow. We wish to get good people out of trouble first. And then we are willing to take up the question of what to do with the bad.

Granted the solution proposed by the more sober heads in the industry is not perfect. It will not guarantee to everyone in the industry today—including the most egregious Communist supporter—his right to the high-level job he may now hold. But it leaves Mr. Miller free to continue his crusade on that score. And it has the merit of dealing with the problem in terms of the truth. We will at least know whom we are defending and why. We will know who is being punished and why. And we can make our own decisions based on a knowledge of the facts, and decide for ourselves whom we wish to fight for and whose troubles are no concern of ours, or of any lover of justice.

Let us, whatever our disagreements on civil liberties, at least put a halt to the shameful procedure that meets the demagogic half-truth with the liberal half-lie.

What ever happened to the old liberal conviction that, in the fight for justice, the best weapon is the truth?

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THE LESSONS OF WORLD WAR II's MISTAKES

Negotiations and Armed Power Flexibly Combined

HANS J. MORGENTHAU

SINCE the prophets of the Old Testament read the warnings of God in the catastrophes of history, men have tried to discover what history can teach them. As Oedipus and Perseus once sought guidance from the Oracle, their empirically inclined descendants search through the record of the past. Yet the results have hardly been different. The more closely men listened to what history seemed to tell them, and the more eager they were to act in accordance with it, the less were they able to extricate themselves from the consequences of their actions, often succeeding only in bringing down the very catastrophes they were trying to escape. If it is true that the only thing history teaches is that it teaches nothing, should we not be done with the "teachings" of history and put our trust in action unencumbered by knowledge of the past? To reason thus, however, would be to misunderstand history in yet another way. Though we cannot look to history for ready-made rules of action, this still does not mean that it has nothing to tell us at all.

Two recent books try to explain the mistakes that we and the enemy made in the Second World War. The way these books were written and then received, and the way in which the United States, in particular, has been trying to avoid and repair the mistakes made in the Second World War, afford illuminating examples of what history can—and cannot—teach.

CHESTER WILMOT's *The Struggle for Europe* (Harper), by far the more important of the two, deals with the roots of our mistakes, as well as with the mistakes themselves. It has created a sensation in England and, to a lesser extent, in the United States.

Mr. Wilmot writes the military history of the late war in Europe from the time of the Normandy invasion, and tries to ascertain the causes of the political failures that attended upon Allied military successes. It is in this last effort that the permanent value of the book lies.

The conduct of the military campaign in Western Europe was dominated by the conflict between the strategic conceptions of General Montgomery, on the one hand, and Generals Eisenhower and Bradley, on the other. Montgomery wanted a decisive thrust from Belgium through the North German plain, destroying the German armies in one bold stroke and ending the war in 1944; the course actually pursued by Eisenhower and Bradley was a methodical advance on a

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THE record of history, HANS J. MORGENTHAU suggests, is not to be read as a handbook of simple and unmistakable instructions for present and future policy; those who have come out of World War II with no more than a few absolute catchwords—"no appeasement" (meaning no negotiations) or "no provocation" (meaning no display of strength or threat of military action)—may be courting disaster. At the same time there are some lessons which can be learned from both the mistakes and the successes of past wars and diplomatic activities—Professor Morgenthau offers a few such lessons for our consideration. Professor Morgenthau is director of the Center for the Study of American Foreign Policy at the University of Chicago. He was consultant to the Department of State in 1949 and 1951, and lecturer at the Air War College and the Army War College, 1950-1951. He is the author of *In Defense of the National Interest* (1951), co-author of *The H-Bomb* (1950), and editor of *Germany and the Future of Europe* (1951). He was born in 1904 in Germany, and took degrees at the University of Munich (1927), the University of Frankfort (1929), and the Graduate Institute for International Studies at Geneva (1932).

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broad front, sacrificing the chances of quick victory to the systematic elimination of all resistance. Mr. Wilmot and large sections of British public opinion take Montgomery's side in retrospect, while most American commentators have indignantly rejected the suggestion that Eisenhower and Bradley might have been wrong.

Some problems of strategy indeed deserve *ex post facto* analysis. The fall of France in 1940 might teach us a lesson about the value of Maginot Lines we might be building today. The demonstrated inefficiency of saturation bombing, especially in relation to the resources committed and the non-military damage caused, might teach us a similar lesson. That frontal attacks against defenses in depth are bound to be costly, and likely to be indecisive, and can only be justified by a proportionate military advantage, the Western Front during the First World War might have taught us; but we had to learn this lesson over again in Italy, and who knows whether we have really learned it even yet?

But the controversy raised by Mr. Wilmot's discussion of strategy is not concerned with fruitful questions like this. The question he asks is unanswerable by its very nature. It would be answerable only—and then indeed in favor of Montgomery—if Eisenhower and Bradley had known in the fall and winter of 1944-45 what everybody knows now, or if at that time Montgomery had known it and Eisenhower and Bradley had not. As it was—and as is inevitable in the conduct of foreign policy by peaceful or military means—all three generals proceeded on the basis of guesses. One made a guess as to the distribution of power between the Allied and the German armies, and suggested a line of strategy following from it. Different people made different guesses and arrived at different strategic conclusions. Montgomery was ready to gamble on the weakness of the German armies, and captured German documents extensively quoted by Mr. Wilmot, as well as subsequent events, seem to prove him right. Eisenhower and Bradley, aware of the lives and issues at stake, preferred a slower and safer course. To blame them for this is like blaming a cautious investor for preferring slow yet sure gains to the bold and risky maneuvers of a brilliant gambler. There is little doubt that Eisenhower's and Bradley's strategy lacked brilliance and imagination and operated rather like a scientific engineering project, but only the most assertive amateur strategist will feel sure that they were therefore wrong; others will remember the brilliance of Napoleon and Ludendorff and how many costly battles they won only to lose their wars in the end.

When Mr. Wilmot comes to the reasons for the *political* failures in a war so thoroughly won in the military field, his indictment of American strategy is, however, unanswerable. We fought the war, he maintains, without giving much thought to the relation between the kind of military victory we were planning to win and the political settlement that would follow it. Mr. Wilmot arrives at this conclusion after a minute examination of the military and diplomatic decisions of the period. Others, such as George F. Kennan and myself, have arrived at the very same conclusion, from an over-all examination of American attitudes toward foreign policy and war as revealed in our policies during and after the First and Second World Wars.

THE fundamental error behind all the individual blunders committed toward the end of the Second World War, and immediately afterwards, was the neglect of Karl von Clausewitz's dictum that war is the continuation of policy by other means. The peaceful and warlike means by which a nation pursues its interests form a continuous process in which, though one means may replace the other, the ends remain the same. We also failed to recognize that foreign policy itself is a continuum beginning with the birth of a state and ending only with its death; isolationists and interventionists alike tended to believe that the "normal" thing for a state was to have no foreign policy at all. What separated the interventionists from the isolationists was the belief that cer-

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tain crises might require, at least temporarily, an active foreign policy. But even the interventionists felt that after solving the given crisis one could try to return to a position of detachment, though developing and supporting in the meantime international institutions designed to meet the next crisis if and when it should arise. Foreign policy was thus regarded as something like a policeman's nightstick, to be used only when it was necessary to bring a disturber of the peace to reason; war, in turn, was like the policeman's gun, to be used only *in extremis* to rid the world of a criminal. But here the analogy ends: the policeman always carries his gun with him, but we threw ours away twice after it had done the job.

War, we could see, did have a necessary connection with what preceded it—that is, with the criminal aggression that provoked it—but it had no organic relation with what followed it. Its purpose was only to eliminate a disturbance by eliminating the disturber; once that was done, the world would presumably settle back into normalcy and order. War, then, was a mere technical operation to be performed according to the rules of military art—a feat of military engineering like building a dam or flattening a mountain. To allow considerations of political expediency to interfere with military operations was unwise from the military point of view and might well be considered an immoral subversion of one self-sufficient department of human action for the sake of another. (It might be added in passing that economic specialists—for instance, administrators of ECA—have shown a very similar reluctance, for similar reasons, to let political considerations "violate" the autonomy of economic operations.)

Mr. Wilmot is fully justified in contrasting the a-political American approach to war with the continuous and generally fruitless insistence of Churchill and his subordinates on the political significance of military action. The British and the Russians knew from long experience that wars are not fought just to bring about the unconditional surrender of the enemy; wars are means to political ends, and military victory, if it is to bear political fruits, must be shaped to those ends.

American military leaders were aware of this difference in outlook, both on the battlefield and afterwards. In April 1945, when the British wanted Patton's army to liberate as much of Czechoslovakia as possible, and Prague in particular, for the sake of the political advantages to be gained thereby, General Marshall passed the suggestion on to General Eisenhower with this comment: "Personally, and aside from all logistic, tactical, or strategical implications, I would be loath to hazard American lives for purely political reasons." Marshall had nothing to worry about in this respect, for Eisenhower replied the next day: "I shall not attempt any move I deem militarily unwise merely to gain a political advantage unless I receive specific orders from the Combined Chiefs of Staff." The matter rested there despite repeated and urgent appeals from Churchill and the British Chiefs of Staff. Similar decisions were made on other occasions. General Bradley in his memoirs has this to say of the British insistence that the Americans take Berlin before the Russians: "As soldiers we looked naively on this British inclination to complicate the war with political foresight and non-military objectives."

This concentration on military objectives to the neglect of political considerations has one virtue: it is apt to win wars quickly, cheaply, and thoroughly. Yet such victories may be short-lived, and an enormous political and military price may have to be paid for them later.

II

THERE is, however, another approach—extreme in a different way—that cannot even claim military advantages; this is to subordinate military considerations entirely to political ones. Of this approach, F. H. Hinsley's *Hitler's Strategy* (Cambridge), describes a classic example.

Hitler thought primarily in political terms. Yet his thinking had two fatal weaknesses. On the one hand, his political think-

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ing was faulty in itself, for the objectives he set for Germany had no relation to either the power available to her or the power of the resistance to be overcome. On the other hand, far from using war as a continuation of policy by other means, he destroyed the technical autonomy of war altogether, using it as though there were no differences at all between war and policy. War became in his hands a political plaything, indistinguishable in its technical aspects from foreign policy—a foreign policy itself doomed to failure by its gross unrealism.

Hitler had a pathological craving to involve in his struggle all the non-committed countries of the world. To see a great nation standing aside uncommitted, was a challenge to his lust for power that he could not resist. But another reason why he chose this suicidal course was his fantastic misconceptions about that part of the world which lay beyond his own personal experience. He knew virtually nothing about the United States; what he knew about the Soviet Union was mostly wrong; and he underestimated Great Britain.

It is obvious from Mr. Hinsley's book that the Soviet Union had no aggressive designs on Germany, and indeed went out of her way to be as accommodating as possible. The German diplomatic and intelligence reports that Mr. Hinsley cites are virtually unanimous in the conviction that the Soviet Union would fight only if attacked. Nevertheless, Hitler was resolved to attack her. He voiced repeatedly his opinion that the Soviet Union would be a pushover, and that the campaign begun in June of 1941 would be over the same autumn. And he went ahead to make plans for autumn campaigns elsewhere to follow the defeat of the Soviet Union. As late as September 17, 1941, he was certain that "the end of September will bring the great decision in the Russian campaign."

To win a war without regard for the political consequences of the victory may create political problems as serious or worse than those that the victory was intended to settle; but such a victory leaves you at least in a position to learn and to try to settle political problems by peaceful means. To overrate the strength of your own country because it is yours and to underrate that of the enemy because you hate him, and to wage war as if warfare were a mere extension of politics and *nothing more*, can lead only to disaster.

III

HAVE we learned these lessons? On the face of it, it seems we have. Certainly we have been almost obsessed with the need to fashion our postwar policies so as to avoid the mistakes we and others made during the Second World War. We have learned that a power vacuum in the vicinity of a great dynamic nation will exert a well-nigh irresistible attraction. We have learned that in order to confine such a state within the limits necessary to our own security, it is not enough to show good will and reasonableness and to embody virtuous intentions in legal instruments. We have learned that the balance of power, far from being just an arbitrary device of reactionary diplomats and Machiavellian scholars, is the very law of life for independent units dealing with other independent units—domestic or international—that want to preserve their independence. Independent power, in order to be kept in check, must be met by independent power of approximately equal strength. In the effort to apply these lessons, we have now embarked upon a long-range policy of "containment" and rearmament.

We have also learned that an imperialist power confronted with a coalition of powers of varying strength will attempt to eliminate the weaker members one after the other, until the most powerful member is left in the end outmaneuvered and alone. We have therefore developed an intricate system of alliances in the Western Hemisphere, Europe, and Asia, which, whatever the differences of legal language and institutional device, all amount to a declaration that we shall defend the territorial integrity of the members of these alliances as we would our own. We call this system of alliances "collective security," and have put it into operation by defending the Republic of South

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Korea against aggression by North Korea.

In these ways, we have obviously learned from history. Why, then, are we as uncertain as ever about the success of our policies, and still beset by doubts about the course we have been taking in recent years? Have we still missed one of the important lessons of recent history, or have we misunderstood what it seemed to teach us? The truth is, though we have learned the lessons of recent history chapter and verse, though we have memorized them and have never tired of reciting and applying them whenever faced with a problem which seemed to be similar to one of those that we failed to solve during the Second World War, yet we have failed to see that behind the specific lessons of history learnt from specific blunders, there stands *the* lesson of history, of *all* history, which alone gives meaning to the lessons to be derived from any particular period.

All political action is an attempt to influence human behavior, hence all political action must be aware of the complexities and ambiguities of the human factor, and must itself be ambiguous and complex—and in the right way. The political actor, conscious of history, must be aware of the malleability of the human will, yet he must also be aware of the limits of suasion and of the need for objective barriers to the human will. *While he is making use of suasion, he must not be oblivious to the role of power, and vice versa,* and of each he must have just the right quantity and quality, neither too much nor too little, neither too early nor too late, neither too strong nor too weak.

He must choose the right admixture not only in terms of human nature, permanent as such but with the relations of its elements ever changing, but also in terms of the changing historical circumstances under which those elements of human nature confront each other in the form of collectivities called nations. How much suasion and power, and of what kind, is available on my side at a particular moment in history, and how much of it and what kind is likely to be available tomorrow? How much and what kind of susceptibility to suasion and power is present on the other side at a particular moment of history, and how much and what kind is likely to be present tomorrow? And how much and what kind of suasion and power is the other side able to bring to bear upon me and others today and tomorrow? Such are the questions posed by the ever-changing social environment.

When, during the closing years of the past war, we thought that Stalin was a somewhat gruff old gentleman who could be charmed into cooperation, we relied on suasion to a greater extent than the teachings of history justified. We think we have learned our lesson from this failure of a policy of suasion pure and simple. Now we seem to have forsworn suasion altogether and to rely exclusively upon force as a deterrent to the ambitions of the Politburo. We seem to forget that force as the instrument of a foreign policy aiming at the peaceful settlement of international conflicts must be a means to the end of foreign policy, not an end in itself. Force supplements suasion, but does not replace it. Secretary of State Acheson recognized this relation between suasion and force in the abstract when he proclaimed repeatedly that the objective of our foreign policy was the creation of situations of strength from which to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the Soviet Union. In practice, however, our foreign policy, preoccupied as it is with rearmament, seems to have lost sight of this objective. Consequently, it has not faced up squarely to the all-important question of timing: when shall we consider ourselves strong enough in relation to the Soviet Union to be able to negotiate from strength? A positive answer is being postponed to an ever more indefinite future. Trying to learn from history, we have set out on an armament race that must lead to war if it is not subordinated to the professed objective of a negotiated settlement. Here again we have learned but half the lesson and have replaced one error with another.

IV

Most often political blunders consist in this over-emphasis of one element in a

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situation at the expense of others. The 1920's and 1930's saw the underestimation by the Western world of the uses of power toward moral and legal ends. The Second World War saw but a seeming interruption of that trend, for power was used then in an effort to restore conditions of harmony and "normalcy" under which we could again rely on law and morality and, as it were, forget about power. We seemed at the time to have learned a lesson from our pre-war relations with the Axis powers: we had neglected power; now we would use it without limit until those who had compelled us to do so were forced to surrender their own power unconditionally. With that task accomplished, we would be able to return to the other extreme and build a new world, without power politics, on the foundations of law and morality.

Consistent with this point of view, we treated our wartime allies, including the Soviet Union, with that same disregard of considerations of power which had characterized our behavior toward everybody in the inter-war period. Yet the same experience that had forced us into power politics against Hitler was to be repeated in our dealings with the Soviet Union. And here, too, we seem to have learned our lesson now. Having shown good will, we now "get tough." Since one can not deal with Stalin by legal contract and without regard for the realities of power, we will now deal with him with the instruments of power alone, without concern for legal stipulations to be agreed upon through mutual suasion. Just as the only alternative to appeasement of Germany, Japan, or Italy without power had been war, so the alternative to appeasement of the Soviet Union is another kind of war.

We also learned from the experiences of the 30's what a blunder isolationism was, which would let one fight only in defense of one's own country but not in defense of allies. But in learning that lesson we are by way of falling into the opposite error: having realized the error of fighting for nobody but oneself, we are now willing to fight for anybody threatened by the common enemy. Collective security, after all, is as abstract and a-political a principle of action as isolationism, equally impervious to the complexity of all political issues which must be decided not according to abstract principles, but by the calculation of opposing interests and powers.

We intervened in Korea because the principle of collective security required it, thus seemingly avoiding the mistake Great Britain and France had made when they refused to defend Ethiopia in 1935-36 and Czechoslovakia in 1938. Actually, we made exactly the same mistake, only in a different way. Truman in 1952 faces the same dilemma Prime Minister Baldwin could extricate himself from in 1936 only at an enormous loss to British prestige. Collective security as a defense of the status quo short of war can be effective only against second-rate powers. Directed against a major power, it is a contradiction in terms, for it inevitably means a major war. Of this self-defeating contradiction Stanley Baldwin was unaware in the 30's as Truman is still unaware of it today. Churchill put Baldwin's dilemma in these cogent terms: "First, the Prime Minister had declared that sanctions meant war; secondly, he was resolved that there must be no war; and thirdly, he decided upon sanctions. It was evidently impossible to comply with these three conditions." Similarly Truman had declared that the effective prosecution of the Korean war meant the possibility of a third world war; he resolved that there must be no third world war; and he decided upon the Korean war. Here, too, it is impossible to comply with these three conditions.

In 1950, as in 1935 and 1938, the issue might better have been decided in terms of the interests involved and the power available as against the interests and power of other nations. Instead, it was resolved in all three instances, either positively or negatively, in the abstract terms of collective security, a principle which could be applied against a major power only at the risk of world war. Before we went to war

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to defend South Korea in the name of collective security, we should have asked ourselves four questions: First, what is our interest in the preservation of the independence of South Korea; second, what is our power to defend that independence against North Korea; third, what is our power to defend it against China and the Soviet Union; and fourth, what are the chances of preventing China and the Soviet Union from entering the Korean war? We have been asking those questions—but only of late, after we are already committed and have lost the freedom of action which the right answers to those questions, posed at the right time, might have saved for us. By substituting an abstract principle of law for the calculation of the concrete conditions of interests and power, we involved ourselves in a war that, in view of these relations of interests and power, we can neither win nor lose. Such are the results of a foreign policy which tries to avoid the mistakes of the past without understanding the principles that should have governed the actions of the past.

We realized what had been wrong with our policies, but in supplying what had been lacking we threw overboard what was no less essential than what we were trying to supply. Thus the very correction of past blunders created new ones. We had seen that diplomacy without power was not enough, so we added power and forgot about diplomacy. We had seen that a nation must stop aggression before it reaches her own shores, and we concluded that we had now to stop all aggression regardless of how our own interests and power were affected. We learned the specific lessons of the last two decades, but in the process we came to neglect the Lesson of History: *that political success depends upon the simultaneous or alternative use of different means at different times, and the moderate use of all of them at all times.*

V

MAN is never able to look at history with the same objectivity as at inanimate nature. The moral limitation upon his understanding of history is pride: pride in his intellect, pride in his goodness, pride in the collectivity with which he identifies himself as against other collectivities.

Pride in intellect shows itself in the persistence with which ideas once adopted are applied time and again, regardless of how discredited by experience. A general whose strategy brought victory in one war finds in success an additional reason for using the same methods in the next war. He did it once, and he is going to do it again. What General MacArthur was able to do to the Japanese in the Second World War he must be able to do to the Chinese in the Korean War.

Even if a certain strategy has been unsuccessful, there is a strong tendency to try it out again, especially if the general sluggishness of the human mind encourages it. The Maginot Line was a disastrous failure in the Second World War. But man is almost irresistibly attracted by the image of a wall behind which he will be safe from the enemy. Since the Maginot Line was a failure, as was the Chinese Great Wall before it, why not build a bigger and better Maginot Line? Or perhaps a bigger and better general will do what General Gamelin was unable to do with the Maginot Line in 1940. The most subtle perversion of the lessons of history is that which appears to heed the experiences of the past and discard its faulty methods, while continuing nonetheless to think in terms of the past. To build a line of static fortifications parallel to the Rhine was certainly a mistake that we shall not emulate. Instead, we shall create a Western European army that will defend Europe at the Elbe, at the Rhine, or wherever else it may be. We seem to have learned a lesson from history; but in view of the novel requirements of global strategy and the numerical superiority of the Russian land armies, have we really?

Pride in intellect is joined by pride in virtue. All individuals and collectivities like to see their conflicts with others not in terms of interest and power determined by

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circumstances, but in terms of moral values determined by abstract principles. When our policies fail, as they did in relation to the Soviet Union after the Second World War, the explanation cannot lie in our having miscalculated our interests and power in relation to the interests and power of the other side. Our failure must be the result of the wickedness of the other side, which took advantage of our guileless trust. We trusted once and were deceived; from now on we shall be on our guard and see the enemy for what he is. Yalta then becomes a symbol, not of the legal ratification of errors of political and military judgment, but of a moral deception that the wicked perpetrated upon the good.

Even so realistic an observer as Mr. Wilmot falls prey to moral pride when he interprets the Yalta Conference. But more than this, he suffers, like virtually everyone else, from the most pervasive pride of our time: pride in collectivity, that is, nationalism. When he tries to formulate the military lessons of the war, he almost automatically takes the side of the British against the Americans;* discussing the lessons to be drawn from Churchill's Balkan strategy, he takes at face value Mr. Churchill's own interpretation.

WHILE such onesidedness, which impairs historical judgment and thus our ability to learn from history, seems inevitable in even the greatest of historians, there are specific manifestations of it that, as great statesmen have shown, can be controlled by moral discipline. One such manifestation is the habit of overestimating one's own power and understanding the other side's. The history of the relations between the Western world and the Soviet Union since 1917 could be written in terms of the underestimation of Russian power. From the Allied intervention in the Russian Civil War through the debates on the implementation of the Franco-Russian alliance of 1935, the Russian offer of support to Czechoslovakia in 1938, the Anglo-French military mission to Moscow in 1939, the German attack upon the Soviet Union in 1941, the first atomic explosion in Russia in 1949, up to the very present, we have always underestimated the power of the Soviet Union. We have done so because we are inflexibly opposed on moral grounds to both Communism and Russian imperialism. Thus our moral sentiment stands in the way of a correct appraisal of the realities of power. To separate our pride in our own moral superiority from our historical judgment, which might lead us to recognize the political and military superiority of the Soviet Union in certain respects, requires an effort at moral detachment which few, obviously, are willing to make. It is easier and more satisfactory to conclude that political and military superiority necessarily go hand in hand with moral superiority. Here again moral pride stands between our judgment and historical experience.

The classic example of this kind of pride, and of its disastrous political and military consequences, is Hitler's. Since Bismarck, it had been the basic axiom of German strategy that Germany could not win a two-front war. However, it was exactly such a war that she deliberately embarked upon both in 1914 and 1941. Hitler himself was resolved not to make this blunder, but he could not help making it, for he believed firmly that it was Germany's "mission" to triumph over her enemies. Holding such a faith, he was led to assume that Germany had already won the war against the West when she had not yet done so, and could therefore safely invade the Soviet Union.

If we find it so difficult to learn from history, the fault is not with history, but with the pride and the intellectual limitations of men. History, in the words of Thucydides, is philosophy learned from examples. Those who are morally and intellectually inferior to its teachings, history leads to disaster. Those who are philosophers in the moral and intellectual sense, it teaches.

* There exists also a contrary form of this pride, an anti-nationalism which sees all wickedness in one's own country and all virtue somewhere else; the most conspicuous victims of this pride are the fellow-travelers of Communism.

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EVANGELIST DEMAGOGUE, 1952 MODEL

Both Sides of the Coin

NATHAN PERLMUTTER

IN THE Milwaukee Auditorium, at the nadir of the depression, in 1936, twenty-two-year-old Kenneth Goff, a rebellious WPA worker from the rural side of the tracks in Delevan, Wisconsin, listened to Earl Browder herald a new world. Goff joined the Communist party, assuming the name of John Keats—who at twenty-two also felt "a new planet swim into his ken." Less than four years later the blasphemed alias died in the hearing chambers of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. "Keats" had informed on his erstwhile comrades. Shortly thereafter, still wet with darkness, Kenneth Goff returned underground, and he joined forces with Gerald L. K. Smith.

Just who is Kenneth Goff?

A "character" (according to neighbors); a "pain in the neck" (according to Denver and Washington, D.C. law-enforcement officers); "destructive to our fundamental laws" (Veterans of Foreign Wars); "unstable and fanatic" (home-town newspaper); "driven forward with the knowledge that He is with me" (Kenneth Goff).

National Committeeman, Young Communist League; National Director, Anti-Communist League; National Chairman, Christian Youth for America (Gerald L. K. Smith's); Evangelist minister; criminal.

Intimate of jailed Red leaders Eugene Dennis, Gil Green, and Henry Winston (whom Goff, while still a Communist, referred to before the Dies Committee as a Negro "boy"); intimate of Jew-baiters Gerald L. K. Smith, Father Coughlin, Reverend Arthur Terminiello.

Goff is thirty-seven years old, of average height, ordinary in build, plain-featured, white-haired. His face wears the neutral expression of the stereotype bank teller. He wears eyeglasses, has an artificial leg. His headquarters are in Englewood, Colorado, in the lap of the Rocky Mountains.

He was born of religious, hard-up parents, in a small, Wisconsin community. He speaks of his parents as "old-fashioned Christians." In truth, they were Congregationalists, "modernists," and would have been anathema to his Bible Belt circuit. In high school, verbose, gregarious, shallowly clever, Goff was a "leader." His fellow students called him "the Senator." He was once appointed by a school teacher to represent the student body in a community activity sponsored by the Congregational Church. However, at the insistence of several of that church's matrons, Goff was removed from his post. He didn't come from the "right" social element.

It was during the 30's that Goff took off, or, perhaps more charitably, was launched on his political career by the depression and unemployment. In March 1936, when the WPA was tiring, Goff, two years out of high school, led a Wisconsin army of strikers in a dramatic seizure of the state capitol's assembly chamber. The action not only captured the imagination of Governor La Follette, who contributed to the strikers' fund, but also intrigued Eugene Dennis,

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IN THIS portrait of Kenneth Goff, one-time minor functionary of the Communist party and now a small-time "evangelist" of reaction and anti-Semitism, NATHAN PERLMUTTER offers a glimpse of the shabby and dangerous world of those drifting malcontents who move from one demagogic gospel to another in their search for a doctrine to fit their fantasies—and make them a career. Mr. Perlmutter, director of the Michigan Regional Office of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, has published articles in the *New Leader*, the *Progressive*, and other magazines. He was born in New York City in 1923.

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then Eighteenth District organizer for the Communist party. Dennis talked to Goff, and in a matter of days Goff joined the party. He spent three years in it. His assignment, suited to his peculiar talents, was to organize "fronts," and to direct the infiltration of party members into non-Communist organizations. He himself infiltrated the Townsend old-age pension movement and parroted the the Communist line at its conventions.

ONE afternoon in 1939, brief case bulging with confidential party papers, Goff was nervously circling the Palmer House in Chicago. Inside was Martin Dies, chairman of the House Committee on Un-American Activities. Goff finally entered the hotel, sought out Dies, and made a preliminary confession, later embroidered before the full Committee.

Goff's resignation from the party, tendered from the witness box in the Committee's hearing chambers, declared his disillusionment with Communism, and his granite intention to "take my stand with those who are fighting for real Americanism and democracy." In response to questioning by J. B. Matthews, the Committee's counsel, he emphasized that his patriotism, unsullied by his Communist experience, had prompted his resignation and confession. However, when prompted to expatiate by Matthews' leading questions, his "patriotism" assumed special meaning: "I have noticed, and I wonder if you have ever noticed, that foreigners who come into this country are able to get jobs. . . . He [the foreigner] has a foreign organization that is in contact with industry. He immediately secures a job, whereas you see American boys always walking the street looking for jobs."

At the time that he broke with the party, Kenneth Goff was unemployed. The break was preceded by the loss of his leg when his automobile collided with a train. In recalling the accident before the House Committee, he stated: "I was to speak at a meeting, when an accident occurred and the automobile threw me under a rapid transit train." Subsequently, upon accepting a lieutenancy under Gerald L. K. Smith, he gave a different version. He had been "a marked man" as a result of having voiced opposition to an alleged party protocol that permitted Jewish Communists to hold meetings from which non-Jewish comrades were barred. Shortly after he had made this protest, while driving his automobile, another automobile "loaded with enemies . . . drove directly toward me at a terrific rate of speed. . . . In a split second I realized that I was being caught between a speeding automobile and a rapidly approaching train. I was hit with a sickening thud and hurled under the wheels. . . . I found myself under the train, in a pool of blood, my leg severed from my body." The "enemy," by inference a Jewish Communist, or an agent of Jewish Communists, "began kicking me in the face, cursing with every movement of his body. That is part of the price I paid for daring to criticize Communist party policy."

Old acquaintances of Goff, and in unguarded moments Goff himself, provide a third version. Party-member attorneys represented the convalescent in the suit resulting from the accident. He was awarded damages amounting to $5,000. Of this, he received $1,000, and the remainder went to a Communist fund for the Spanish Civil War and to cover the expenses of delegates to a convention of the Young Communist League. He had been pressured for the $4,000 "contribution" while still in a hospital wheel chair by a party lawyer, a Jew. Physically weak, in conflict about the party, he consented. But when he left his hospital bed it was as a perverted Ahab in vengeful quest of a Jewish Moby Dick.

GOFF wasted little time in capitalizing on his membership in the Communist party, billing himself in speaking engagements across the country, "I Was Stalin's Agent." In 1943, while speaking before a super-patriotic nationalist organization in Chicago, he was "discovered" by Gerald L. K. Smith. The relation they formed, which lasted for some six years, was that of master mechanic and apprentice. Under Smith's tutelage, Goff became a Fundamen-

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talist evangelist "minister," fronting a variety of Smith organizations variously labeled "Christian Youth for America," "Christian Veterans," "Lutheran Research Bureau," etc. Certain other incidents during this period included passing a rubber check, a fine for throwing stink-bombs, and another fine for rent-gouging in defiance of the OPA.

These incidents embarrassed Smith and his "respectable" Christian Nationalist Crusade. In 1949, when the master mechanic refused to raise Goff's salary, both parties used the occasion for a split. In departing, Goff accused Smith of using his Christian Nationalist Crusade expense account for fast living in expensive hotels. Goff himself had been constantly dissatisfied with the second- and third-rate hotels to which Smith's control of the Crusade's purse strings confined him.

Today, still billed as "I Was Stalin's Agent," Goff has been forced into the Mountain and Plains States' Bible Belt by the competition of other hate-mongering entrepreneurs. Here he compounds Fundamentalism with revelations about "the real name of David Niles"; here Americanism is interwoven with the "real" significance of Anna Rosenberg's appointment; and here are unsophisticated audiences still impressed by such tired handbills as "10 MILLION WHITE PEOPLE TO BE DRIVEN FROM THEIR HOMES TO MAKE ROOM FOR BLACK COMMUNIST SOVIET."

FROM the Communists Goff learned that the dialectics of Leninism-Stalinism, ordinarily difficult to digest, could be candied over with a Scottsboro Case or a Willie McGee; from the fascists he learned that Goebbels-Alfred Rosenberg could be sugared over with "America First." A professional nationalist and currently a heckler of the United Nations, Goff some time ago in Denver showed a finesse which might have caused his old comrades to remember him with grudging admiration.

The Women's Auxiliary of the American Legion had presented the Denver municipality with a set of United Nations flags "estimated to cost $50,000." The flags, including those of the Soviet Union and its satellites, were flown in a local square in connection with the observance of United Nations Week. In 1950 a vandal tore and trampled the Soviet flag. As a result, the next year, police squads were assigned to the flag-raising ceremonies with special instructions to guard the flag of the USSR. The precautions, however, were of a Keystone variety. The guards stationed themselves around the Byelorussian and Ukrainian flags in the mistaken belief that they were protecting the flag of the Soviet Union.

The driver of a certain sedan proved himself somewhat more versed in flag lore than the local constabulary. For as the flags were being hoisted, the sedan coasted up alongside the Russian flag, a figure scurried from its front seat, slashed the flag several times, dashed back into the auto, and was sped off while the Denver police half a block away "protected" the satellite flags.

The incident received wide publicity. First, the vandalism, then the revelation that the sedan belonged to Goff, then that Goff was an accessory to the culprit, one Dewey McKinley Taft, an itinerant hate-pamphleteer. Then stories on Goff the "fighting minister," on his being served with a police summons, the finding that the summons was invalid for lack of proper jurisdiction, and finally Goff's newsy, gleeful boast that he would sue the president of the UN Committee for Colorado for having authorized the flying of the Russian flag "while our boys are dying in Korea."

The newspapers gaily played the role of brass band. But Goff was dead serious. He reprinted in the thousands newspaper headlines like: MINISTER LONG KNOWN AS ANTI-COMMUNIST AGITATOR. These were distributed far and wide, priming a special Reverend Kenneth Goff "defense fund" (the fine Goff faced was all of fifty dollars). More important, his widely quoted platitudes about the "boys in Korea," the "Communist threat," etc., made the United Nations rather than the act of vandalism the issue. Result? The president of the UN Committee publicly apologized for having had the Russian flag

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flown in a UN display, Goff raised sufficient funds to face fines for flag-ripping in all forty-eight states and then some, and the UN suffered a public-relations licking.

GOFF'S speeches today are preceded by musical uplifts, just as in the old days. But the guitar has given way to the organ, and "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus" has replaced the labor and revolutionary songs of his "undergraduate" days.

He establishes his tone very quickly. "I met a State Department man in the train on my way here to Greeley [Colorado]. Got to talking with him about Uncle Joe Stay-lin and things. Know what he told me? 'You goddamn Christians keep your nose out of world affairs!'"

Goff's is a metallic, insistent voice. In minutes it hammers into silence even the restless children brought along to hear the well-advertised "big-city preacher saved from Communism by Jesus." As he warms to his task, children as well as parents sit awed and frightened in hard wooden chairs that cease their creaking as he recalls "a particularly revolting picture hanging on the wall [in an office of the 'Jew-controlled' Communist party]. It showed Christ's intestines hanging from his stomach while workers gnaw at his entrails, drinking from his veins. . . ."

Goff's mountain and prairie circuit followings, mainly Fundamentalists weighed under by a thousand social taboos, eagerly look forward to his appearances. His egomania does not offend them sufficiently, nor do his fantastic theories on world politics ("Within five years we will be engaged in a war with Russia! Don't believe it? *Read Ezekiel! ! !*"), to prevent them from being spellbound by his cleverly prudish "smut stories." Craftily, with the canny boldness of a sorcerer, he weaves vivid visions of sex and sadism, inviting his audiences to the luxury of vicarious sinfulness.

Again and again he tells of the Spanish Civil War and of Loyalist "raids on convents, when every nun would be repeatedly raped by alternating Red beasts until dead. Then their bodies would be piled high like cordwood. . . . After being swathed in oil, the torch was applied and the stench of burning flesh became a sweet odor to the nostrils of these half-crazed Communists." Significantly, the audiences to which this story is told are first given generous doses of *anti*-Catholicism. They are audiences to whom Goff can say, "Senator McCarthy is a great American despite being a Roman Catholic."

To audiences that fear the Negroes more than the Catholics, he tells of Communist Ella Reeve Bloor, who allegedly instructed the girls in Goff's Communist classes to become the "whores of the revolution." "White girls would be expected at all times to submit themselves to Negroes, Chinese, and others!"

Before the evening ends, and immediately preceding the passing of the plate, Goff details the Kremlin's plans for raping the women and girls of Cheyenne, Denver, Omaha, wherever his "Confessions" happen to have been booked. He reveals the plans of the local Communist cells for wrecking radio stations, tearing up streetcar lines, exploding electric plants, and asserts that continued prayer and "support" for him may prevent these catastrophes. His audiences have not been deaf to this appeal.

PERSONALLY, Goff is somewhat less formidable than his public activities make him appear. Last December, the American Christian Friends of Palestine sponsored an appearance in Denver by John Roy Carlson. Carlson, then recently returned from an undercover trip through the Near East, was scheduled to speak on his impressions of Israel and the Arab countries. In the audience, along with some of Denver's leading citizens, were Richard Hamel, apostate Jew and founder of the American Fascist Union, the Reverend William L. Blessing, named by the American Legion as a "hate" subversive, Dewey McKinley Taft, Goff's crony, and Goff himself. All asked heckling questions, all received polite replies. After the meeting, Carlson found himself beside Goff. Playfully he hailed Goff with, "How well and handsome you look, Kenneth!"

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Goff, who some minutes before had prefaced a baiting question with, "Mr. Carlson, or whatever name you're going under now," blushed, hung his head, shuffled his feet, and looked pleased as punch! William Blessing, too, was treated to Carlson's high spirits. Some days later the chairman of the local American Christian Friends of Palestine committee received a phone call from Blessing, who, speaking for himself and Goff, indicated that a "protest" meeting they had scheduled had been called off as a result of Carlson's "gracious" treatment of them!

In 1946, while still an associate of the Reverend Harvey Springer, now a big-league hate-monger, Goff was arrested for passing a rubber check. His "imprisonment" lasted for a few hours in the Denver County Jail, an institution which compares favorably with any other big-city county jail.

Shortly after his release on bond, thousands upon thousands of leaflets captioned "Kenneth Goff in Jail" flooded the mails. The return address? "Kenneth Goff Defense Fund." The text of the leaflets, deserving honorable mention in anthologies on "prison literature," detailed his "ordeal." It told of his arrest while in the "Tabernacle," of his having been fingerprinted "four times" and: "Escaping this crowd of Red reporters [earlier in the text identified by Goff as newsmen for the *Rocky Mountain News*, a Scripps-Howard publication] by quick action on my part, I was taken to the county jail. Then they stripped me of my clothes and examined my wooden leg to see that there were no concealed weapons on me.

"From there I was led through several iron doors to South Lower in the prison and assigned to cell 10 with three other men. South Lower was a smelly, vermin-infested bullpen which was filled with every sort of hard-boiled prisoner, including fourteen murderers, several rapists and an insane man.

"Asking for food, they told me supper had already been served and I would have to wait till morning. Several prisoners got together and fixed me some tea with hot water from the faucet. Then they gave me little old moldy crackers and cookies that they had hidden away to soothe the pangs of hunger. Hot tears rolled down my cheeks as I saw these unfortunate men so willing to give what little they had to aid a fellow man while outside this motley crowd of Jew-Communists were crying for my blood.

"My soul leaped with joy as I realized what an opportunity God had given me to testify to His marvelous saving grace to these shipwrecked men. Many of the men came to me for spiritual advice. Three, who had backslidden, crawled back underneath the cross again. . . .

"As the clock ticked away toward 9:00 P.M., everyone told me I was doomed to spend the night in prison. . . . I felt like singing praises to God and lifted my voice in the good old gospel hymn:

"There's not a friend
"Like the lowly Jesus;
"No, not one,
"No, not one.

"The guards came running and warned me if I was caught singing again, I would be thrown in the hole. . . .

"Yes, beloved, the fight is still on. This weekend I will appear in court and plead not guilty. The attorney for the D.A.'s office opposing me is a MR. LICHTENSTEIN."

The leaflet ended with a perforated "box" addressed to the "Kenneth Goff Defense Fund." It read, "After reading your message describing your humiliating treatment at the hands of these Jew-Communists, I am enclosing my sacrificial offering of $—."

WHAT of Goff's conversion from Communism to fascism? Is it really possible for the human robot of 1984 to revert so speedily to Neanderthalism? From Communism to Catholicism or to splinter socialism or even to hard-shell capitalism is not too uncommon a transition. But Communism to fascism?

Or is it possible that the antithesis between the two is greatly exaggerated? Certainly Goff's effortless change-over from Communism to fascism lends credence to the growing realization that they are two sides of the same totalitarian coin.

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OUR MIDDLE-AGED "YOUNG WRITERS"

The Avant-Garde at a Dead End

SEYMOUR KRIM

OPEN the pages of any of our literary magazines, look at the Contributors' Notes column, and the chances are good that you will find at least three out of the twelve contributors identified as "young writers." It can be quite a shock to meet one of these Young Writers and find him baldish, drinking celery tonic for his heartburn, worried about his third child, and in general a victim of cranky middle age. And when one looks a little more closely at this wry jest of the Young Writer in our times—who seems to average nearer forty than twenty—one discovers some interesting aspects of the present period in American letters.

Let us think back to what Young Writer meant in the flowering 1920's—the era that celebrated youth and glamorized the profession of literature. It meant a young man or woman under thirty, and usually about twenty-five or so, who wrote works of a "creative" nature. It included E. E. Cummings, Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Dos Passos, and others when their early work appeared and each of these men was in his early or middle twenties. Apart from their actual age their work was also "young"—fresh, tangy, brash, and completely different in tone and point of view from the older generation of, say, Theodore Dreiser (although there was only one Dreiser, to our loss). Independent, vigorous, and ready to gamble, they lived up, or down, to their cocky youth.

Now consider some of our current writers who are identified as "young," either in the Sunday book review sections, in literary conversation, or in our own minds: J. F. Powers, Paul Bowles, Michael Seide, Delmore Schwartz, Eudora Welty, Saul Bellow, Jean Stafford, Ralph Ellison, Bernard Malamud, Mary McCarthy, Carson McCullers, Alfred Kazin, J. D. Salinger—these are some better-known names, chosen at random; more could be added, including, no doubt, the author of this article (some few years hence, at any rate) and—the truth must out!—even some of the editors of this magazine.* All of these writers are at least in their mid-thirties, and the quality of their work is hardly young in any sense. They are a sophisticated, complex, embattled group with none of the high-dive leaping—eyes shut and a whistle on the lips—that characterizes truly young writing. It is plain, then, that in this time the definition of literary youth has been extended—distended, in fact—but it is not so plain what the reason is.

WHEN we call someone young we are talking not only of his actual years but of his total bearing, his "maturity" or lack

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THE crisis of avant-garde writing has by now become an open fact, and SEYMOUR KRIM, himself a young member of the avant-garde, is one of those who have done much to publicize and, even more important, analyze this fact, which may mark a turning point in the development of American literature. Here he examines some of the causes of the decline and suggests where the remedies might be found. Mr. Krim was born in New York City in 1922, attended the University of North Carolina, and has supported himself since leaving college by reporting for the *New Yorker*, writing for the OWI, doing motion picture publicity, etc. His short stories and reviews have appeared in the New Directions annuals, *Partisan Review*, the *New York Times Book Review*, and other periodicals.

*Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, Calder Willingham, Gore Vidal, and the other literary striplings are certainly young-er; but to be consistent in this era of elongated youth they should properly be called Young-Young Writers.

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of it. Today, many of our most sensitive and serious talents are maturing as writers at a much later age than their opposite numbers in the 1920's or even the 1930's. This naturally extends their youth in our eyes. Their output is on the whole very small compared to the generation of the 20's, and this, too, enters into the idea of "youth," rightly or wrongly. A traditional sign of maturity is vigorous production with a clear-sighted goal in view. But that is precisely what has been so hard for our harried old-Young Writers to achieve.

Unlike the generation of American prose writers following the First World War, who broke fresh ground, our finest younger authors have not been anything like pioneers in the older sense. The dramatic union of American experience and European perspective after the first war brought into our prose literature a newness of sensibility (E. E. Cummings), a poet's concern with language as a means of rendering fresh aspects of experience (Djuna Barnes, Hemingway), a technical audacity designed to give immediacy to the violent realities of American life (Dos Passos, Faulkner), as well as other fresh contributions. Here was vitality, daring, and above all the intoxicating sense of "new vistas," as Hart Crane phrased it for a generation. Today's serious Young Writers, on the other hand, came of literary age directly after this outburst of creativity, and faced a new set of problems. As artists they were required to absorb all the radical changes that had just taken place in our literature; not only those radical changes named above, but the even more formidable contributions—evocative of the whole spirit of modern Western civilization—made by such men as Joyce, Proust, Eliot, and Thomas Mann. With so much to learn—whoever wanted to do justice to *Ulysses* or *The Wasteland* had to study five other subjects as well—and so much to speculate about, these writers needed more time to *think* than their immediate predecessors, who *acted*. The creative urge, as it was once innocently called, had to be swallowed down or at least sidetracked, and men and women who wanted to do nothing but "write" found themselves becoming students instead.

Thus our most sensitive literary minds remained "younger" than writers the same age who absorbed less, probed less, experimented less, but hardened earlier. The contrast between Jerome Weidman and, say, Eleanor Clark is instructive: both are approximately the same age, yet Weidman matured as a writer more than ten years ago (and has been going downhill since) while the more serious Miss Clark is still developing, and has just published only her second book to Weidman's thirteen. History, we might say, has forced our better writers to behave like perpetual graduate students—to extend their knowledge at the sacrifice of accomplishment—and this imbalance has kept their youth alive if only in the traditional sense that maturity is earned by resolution and commitment, which is difficult to achieve if you are not sure what to resolve and commit yourself to. Born under the constellations of experimental literature and difficult thought, this literary generation had to sweat out perplexing problems which the "beautiful and damned" Fitzgeralds and Hemingways, for all their gifts, were never faced with.

But apart from this there is, I think, a stronger reason why Miss Clark or any of her "group" can still be called Young Writers with some legitimacy. That reason is this: with psychoanalysis and the values it has filtered into the literary life, we have come to feel with a new sharpness that "youth" is symbolized by economic, emotional, or intellectual dependency, and "maturity" by the ability to make a living, to stand on one's own feet—in a word, to be "independent" in a tangible sense. Oversimplified as these catchwords may be, they provide us with a clue. Our most serious writers are not independent in this everyday sense—as their analysts enjoy pointing out to them. They are unable to make a living from their own work. They remain dependent on friends, family, wives, part-time teaching jobs, and many other uncertain sources of income.

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They are rarely able to assume the traditional burdens of adulthood in the sense of earning enough money to own a home (or even a decent apartment), to establish and govern a family, or to develop those parts of the personality that lead to authority and decisiveness in practical affairs. This means that our dedicated writer in his mid-thirties is often truly "young" in many of the ways that the world and perhaps you and I as *people*—not as artists or intellectuals—consider important. Many of these writers, for reasons we will look into, have been cut off from an area of life—often deliberately—that forces ordinary people to develop muscles, so to speak, on the plane of action.

THIS phenomenon, I believe, is for clear historical reasons peculiar to the generation of American "highbrow" writers we have been discussing. They were the first home-bred group of writers to bear the full brunt of European-inspired "modern" writing—its implications and standards—and, wanting nothing but the best, they tried to live up to what they *thought* were its injunctions. With Joyce, Proust, Kafka, and others as guides and heroes, the most earnest members of this generation deliberately sacrificed certain aspects of living to attain what they thought was a higher goal. The specialization of modern art seemed to imply a special way of life as well; one lived outside conventional society, and was therefore immune to criticisms of personal behavior or weakness which applied to the majority of people. What we now call "neurosis" or "frustration" was often not only accepted, but positively embraced, as the inevitable and almost holy martyrdom of the artist; the sufferings of a Flaubert or a Cézanne were as romantically sanctified as the corpse of Lenin, offering a possibility of personal identification which gave purpose to one's life and ennobled one's personal pain—not merely allowed one to bear it, or even forget it. In other words, certain attitudes were cultivated to the exclusion of others by the most self-aware members of this generation, with High Art, modeled on the achievement of the European greats of the first quarter of the century, serving as the highest criterion of one's life and thinking.

Now that we have entered an era with another prevailing point of view—that of psychoanalysis—it is easy to say, and many unthinking people do, that the philosophy outlined above provided a perfect rationalization for personal inadequacies. In several cases it probably did just that; but in most the point of view was not only sincere but courageous, and the dedication to the life of art meant, not self-deception, as certain too gullible exponents of psychoanalysis now maintain, but, more often, an ultimate commitment in terms which *then* were meaningful and hence faith-giving. In any case, however, the point to establish here is that whatever the motives of each individual in sublimating his life to a specific, European-inspired, early-20th-century conception of High Art, the prevailing attitude precluded the development of a different point of view, and of different parts of the personality not thought to be of the highest value and hence either scorned or ignored.

What seems to have happened now is that many members of this generation of Young Writers find themselves unprepared for the life around them in today's America, either as writers or people. And their earlier ideals, modeled on a particular time and attitude, are no longer relevant, by the testimony of their own lives. Instead of finding fulfillment—passion, significance, completeness, whatever word you wish—in their work and being proud of their isolation, as the pioneers (from Joyce to Hemingway) seemed to have been, they have too often ended up feeling themselves orphans of American life—unwanted, ignored, no longer sure of their direction. And they are too sensitive and too intelligent not to see how pretentious and irrelevant is the old notion of the artist as High Priest—how "square" and romantic against the ironic realities of American life as they know it.

It seems safe to say that the Young Writers we have been discussing have undergone a true change of heart. They are surrounded

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by a much more complex, challenging, and highly organized society than were their fellows of the 1920's—those who helped give them their aesthetic standards and who brought home from the European experience an attitude of superiority towards America which has lasted until this time. Many of our writers have now come to feel that American society holds values unlike any they could have imagined before, and they have begun to see their own separation from America no longer as a badge of honor but as a serious deprivation. They have also begun to question the value of their own poverty—a poverty which could be borne with good humor only so long as the fundamental premise of *purpose* was unquestioned.

Thus it is that writers once piously "alienated" from American life have begun to seek "integration." No longer does their safety, as artists or men, lie in that highbrow exclusiveness which once divided the world neatly into the minority of intellectual haves and the majority of have-nots; the criteria on which that division rested have lost their bite since American mass mediums (like *Life* and TV) have begun to popularize, and will do so increasingly, some of the very values which were once the property of the chosen few. No longer can the individual rationalize his personal deficiencies under the guise of Art; the ideas of psychoanalysis, whether we accept them or not, have taken the bloom off any rhapsodic ideas of the suffering artist. And no longer can American culture in the gross or popular sense be dismissed as beneath comparison with European advance-guard culture, for American life on even the low level has become more significant and interesting to the serious writer than European art on the high. All signs seem to point one way: writers now want to participate more than ever before in American life, and are beginning to measure themselves against certain standards of American success which they once despised.

IT HAS reached the point where many who used to look down upon the big, so-called national magazines as a matter of course now regard the challenge of *Collier's* or *Saturday Evening Post* "professionalism" with new eyes (nor let us forget the *American Mercury,* which recently seems to have become an annex to *Partisan Review,* breaking the vise on wisdom formerly held by 14th Street and spreading it to the country at large by publishing *PR* contributors and editors). The emphasis now is less on the falsity of "slick" stories, or the intellectual poverty of both readers and writers who commune within the glossy pages, and more on proving to oneself that one can master this form of popular expression and break out of the solitary confinement which serious writers have endured for the last decade. It is not that our writers think more highly of popular writing than they once did; it is that they think *differently* about it, and with their revision of values one now sees complimentary essays about someone like J. P. Marquand, an eminently successful popular writer who was able to "beat the racket" in a way that appeals to writers who suffer from lack of money, fame, and an audience, and from an isolation which except in the strongest leads to self-concern and its twin brother, self-doubt. Once these same writers would rather have been caught reading Somerset Maugham—embarrasing enough!—than praise Mr. Marquand publicly. Now they get a sense of accomplishment out of selling their work to the big magazines which they often can no longer feel in publishing a story in a little magazine.

Here is a decisive change of attitude, one that breaks sharply with the best literary traditions of this country for the last twenty-five years, and it seems to be proof that this is a crucial transitional period in our literature. Involved in this change of attitude is the growing reaction of our writers against the little magazines, which for the last quarter of a century had served as the foremost literary showcase of the avant-garde. These journals, begun by Ezra Pound and the British rebel Wyndham Lewis in London around 1915—and then carried to Paris by Pound, and subsequently to America—pioneered in printing the work of the great European ex-

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perimentalists and the expatriate Americans of the First World War generation. The little magazines thus became invested with romantic significance for the generation we have been discussing, a significance that remained to them even during the Marxist era.

For more than twenty-five years the little magazines were looked upon as the only outlets for really meaningful work in fiction. This is not true today. The little magazines have come to be regarded by many of our best Young Writers as repositories for amateurism in fiction; creatively they no longer hold the "glow" and sense of purpose they once did. Rejected stories from the sleek bourgeois magazines—bourgeois in lack of daring, lack of purpose, like the *New Yorker, Harper's Bazaar,* and *Mademoiselle*—frequently find their way into the little magazines nowadays, so that those once creative mediums now often display either inferior conventional fiction or amateurish "unconventional" stories unredeemed by freshness or by pertinence to the needs of their readers.

But the important point to be made is that the little magazine is no longer the home of the advance guard in creative writing because that very advance guard is no longer meaningful in the older sense, and the breach has not been filled with any creative or critical leadership that might be as pertinent to our current needs as was the leadership of Pound or Joyce to the needs of a quarter of a century ago. This being so, and with confusion of literary values rampant in the pages of the little magazines themselves—to the extent that there is no longer any acceptable criterion as to what constitutes a piece of "good" or "bad" fiction, and worse, no attempt is being made to establish new standards—it is no wonder that some of our Young Writers feel they have backed the wrong horse and regard the once philistine national magazines with a fresh eye. The cost of living, in both the literal and figurative sense, has gone up and no longer admits of lip service to a literary ideal which is not rooted in life as it is lived today.

It seems clear that the change of heart of the Young Writers would not have shown itself so decisively if there had not been a corresponding lack of vitality in the editorship of the little magazines—once the outlets for freedom of artistic expression, animated by purpose and dedicated to a responsibility for the best that the literary imagination could conceive. Today not only is there lack of aggressive purpose and life-giving passion—if one can judge by the often unnecessarily involved and pedantic tone that drones away within the pages of the major little magazines—but literature itself is treated as a rather boring and irrelevant concern, inferior to philosophy or gossip and important mainly to show how much greater were dead European writers than living American ones—or if some live American is singled out, it is because, by some chilling logic, he resembles a dead Russian! (Apropos gossip, several of the so-called stories in recent issues of *Partisan Review* are little more than expansions of "Did you hear that So-and-So . . .?" involving Greenwich Village personalities—to this Homeric height has the "best literary magazine in America," as Edmund Wilson once called it, ascended!)

No wonder, then, that into the lap of the generation of writers discussed here have fallen problems that will admit of no easy solution. Writers who once looked to the little magazines for the kind of leadership and sense of purpose which in the past they seemed to have must now supply their own. In an age of increasing possibilities and complexity, the major literary magazines have let us down badly. They have kept to no discernible course in either the encouragement or the publishing of creative work. They have ignored the problem, crucial to any magazine editor, of being vitally *interested* in and then going out and getting the liveliest new American prose writers, either because they are out of touch and have a point of view formed twenty years ago, like the editor of one review, or because they are literature-weary and clannish, like the editor of another, or because they are just plain not concerned, like the leading editor of a

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third, who said in this writer's presence that he was more interested in "ideas" than fiction, and implied that he wished he didn't have to publish the stuff at all.

Nor are these the only sad charges to be leveled against these so-called upholders of the best literary traditions of this country. In the deluge of articles published in our literary magazines on Existentialism, Psychoanalysis, Marxism, The Negro, and The Jew, very little attempt has been made to relate these provocative ideas *technically* and *concretely* to the ultimate *act* of literature, which is, after all, the point of a literary magazine. The result is that the editors of our magazines often lament the fact that their contributors don't send them "exciting" or "meaningful" creative fiction—which is their own fault to the extent that they haven't encouraged in their pages the kind of *thinking* that brings it about—and our gifted writers have been swamped trying to absorb many provocative ideas, ranging from the Leibnitzian nature of comic strips to the Kierkegaardian nature of God, and relate them to the seemingly boring struggle of making literature. What has happened in such an environment as the literary magazines have been fostering is that the creative writers have begun to doubt the value of art and have become ashamed that they are not experts on everything from Symbolic Logic to the Principles of Gestalt—it should be no secret that the artist's ego is his faith, and when abstract ideas are the means to achieve prestige he will try to outdo Husserl himself.

Who is to say that our literary magazines, which hitherto have been the self-proclaimed guardians of the highest literary tradition, are not in part responsible for this state of waste and self-doubt on the part of our writers? Have they tried to reassess the value of fiction in an age which threatens it? Have they made a basic distinction between the function—and, if you will, grandeur—of art and that of ideas, no matter how provocative the latter might be in an analytical period like ours? Have they tried to combat, in this age of specialization, an increasing eclecticism which devours thought from all sources —a dangerous tendency in a time when each department of knowledge is highly technical —and inspires confusion because it follows no guiding principles and attempts to construct no consistent point of view?

Surely it is true that the province of literature has necessarily broadened in this time, and that much of it will be concerned with "ideas"; but just as surely, this will necessitate a stronger faith in that container of ideas, literature itself, which must be recreated with the total life-needs of each generation. And yet, at the zenith of this country's vitality, with its character struggling to be molded in art and its imagination demanding expression in art, our major literary magazines do not rise to the occasion. Where our needs, as writers, "intellectuals," or men, demand order and purpose more than ever before because of the ear-splitting jangle of the times, we receive from our literary magazines no sure sense of purpose, no certainty of taste or direction, no critical leadership based on *literary* values, and none of that concern for the creative work of a new generation which distinguished little magazines in the past.

Where the literary artist, whose great gift is his imagination, should be encouraged he is discouraged, his imagination is disparaged, and he is intimidated by the very critics who should be his protectors and who eventually will even "learn" from him, though you would not guess it from their false omniscient tone. It should therefore be no surprise that many of the aging Young Writers, whose destinies were once allied with the little magazines by common purpose and common values, have left or are leaving the fold. Nor should it be a surprise that the few among them who have never lost faith in Art—for the simple reason that they are artists, that is, men who will literally create their brothers in the light of their imaginative grasp of the truth—have done so by turning their backs on the distracting contemporary holler and giving themselves up to the first law of creation, silence.

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VISIT TO THE OLD COUNTRY

The Lodz That Was

GEROLD FRANK

ON A sultry day in July of 1937 my wife and I arrived in Lodz, charged with the duty of finding my grandmother's sister Surah. It was now a little before noon; the train for Prague (we had promised friends to meet them there at a prearranged hour) would leave at 9 P.M. We had about eight hours or so in which to find Surah.

It was my grandmother's wish that had brought us to Poland in the course of a belated honeymoon tour of Europe. My grandmother always remembered Surah as she had seen her last—a weeping girl of thirteen, her black hair braided down her back, standing forlornly in the midst of the sobbing family group and waving after the cart as it rumbled along the yellow road, taking my grandmother, for better or worse, to a new world and a waiting husband. In the years that had elapsed the two sisters had been able to touch hands across the sea, so to speak, by letter alone. But neither was a letter-writer: it seemed a tremendous and almost overpoweringly emotional effort to write. Often two or three years would pass with no letters between them. Those that arrived from Europe were incomplete, stumbling, stiffly formal—or, with floodgates suddenly opened, full of tears and lament, crowded with "God preserve you," "God keep you," and "May the Eternal be good to you."

Sixty years had passed since that day and it was my grandmother, now almost in her dotage, who prayed that we find Surah and tell her that all was well. "You will find her," my grandmother assured me, taking from one of the pockets of her voluminous skirts a small battered black notebook in which Surah's addresses (and falling fortunes) through the years—first in the little village of Rava, then the town of Skiernowicz, then the city of Warsaw, and finally Lodz—were recorded in a faithful series of scrawls laboriously written in pencil. My grandmother fumbled through its pages until she found the last entry. She placed a shaking finger under it and read aloud to herself: "This," she murmured, "this I wrote when I received her last letter. In that letter Surah's daughter was married. And when was that?" She pondered, her finger trembling on the faded leaf. Finally she looked up in triumph. "I received it the summer you joined the newspaper. You remember?"

"But that was—let me see—ten years ago," I protested.

"No matter," said my grandmother, imperturbably. "Nothing changes quickly in the old country. You will find her. She has a new husband—her first husband, may he rest in peace, passed away. His name was Yankel—Yankel Myerovitch. He had a long black beard, beautiful, beautiful. Once Surah sent me his picture." My grandmother looked hopefully up at me. "But you go to this

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THIS description of a visit to Lodz in 1937 has the effect of a message from the grave. That the kind of Jewish life it describes expired in Auschwitz casts in retrospect but a deeper shadow over a situation dark and grim enough in itself. GEROLD FRANK previously appeared in this magazine in its second number, December 1945, with an account of the trial of the Moyne assassins in Cairo. He is well known as a foreign and war correspondent whose activity has covered the Middle and Near East as well as Europe. He has contributed articles and stories to *Harper's*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Life*, the *New Yorker*, *New Republic*, and numerous other periodicals, and is co-author of two books on the recent war, *Out in the Boondocks* (1943), and *U.S.S. Seawolf* (1945). Mr. Frank was born and brought up in Cleveland; he holds degrees from Western Reserve and Ohio State. Mr. Frank was for a time national director of public information for B'nai B'rith, and is now a senior editor of *Coronet* magazine.

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neighborhood and you will find her. Ask for Surah, Surah the black one from Warsaw, whose dead husband was a Myerovitch and who married again a man from Lodz."

Well, those were the best instructions I could get, and here we were in Lodz, hopeful and apprehensive. Our apprehension came from the sense we had of tampering with things long past, with a generation buried in time. There seemed something blasphemous, something against nature, in this deliberate pushing aside of the years and resurrecting of someone who had been little but a ghost to me since my earliest days. Nonetheless, we asked directions, we boarded trolleys, and finally we found our street. Even in this there was something fearful. A trolley in Lodz was not much different from one in New York or Cleveland, and if you were to close your eyes for a moment and open them again, an important thoroughfare in Lodz had much the same appearance as one in any typical small industrial American city. But when we dismounted and turned the corner of the street marked in my grandmother's notebook, we turned from the modern world into the medieval.

THE street of my grandmother's notebook was a winding, cobblestoned, hysterical street. My first impression was like that received when a newsreel is suddenly speeded up, or when old newsreels are seen on television: life bustled and hurried jerkily and frantically before my eyes. Small crowded stores, interspersed with ancient wooden doorways; wandering peddlers; great courts with their massive pockmarked wooden doors swung half-open; and people—a mixing, converging, ever moving flux of men and women and children, swarming through the streets and over the pavements, stopping to chat, raising their voices, gesticulating, gesturing, grimacing, laughing—then the mixed odor of the unwashed, the horses steaming in the hot sun, the horrid fluid which moved sluggishly in the open sewers along either curb, the haggard, unshaven faces of the pious, the earlocks of the men, the long black gaberdines, the shiny black boots, the creak of leather, the wigs of the women, the small black eyes, the sudden appraising glances, the halt in conversation, the whispers—nowhere in Europe had we this same sense of being tossed in the midst of heaving, interlocked humanity, in the midst of a multitude moved not by a single impulse but fluid and ever changing and held, atom by atom and person by person, by the bonds of poverty, suspicion, and not quite articulated fear.

The people blended into a mass, and the mass was without color. Black predominated, and the gray shades of black. Old men dozed in chairs at the side of courtyard entrances. Children were under your elbows. They ran after each other, after their parents, after mothers pushing baby carriages. They played and shouted, they leaped over the open sewers and the broken tin cans and dashed in and out of courtyards and hopped over piles of indefinite, unbelievable rubbish.

My heart sank. Find Surah here? Would she be living here? And if she were, how would we go about finding her? What persons would we ask? We were already the center of an embarrassing attention, for Poland was far off the beaten tourist track, and to this section of Lodz, where the great mass of its Jews lived, no chamber of commerce, no tourist bureau, ever directed even the rare visitor. (I remembered what the Cook's man had said when I first told him the street I sought. "Oh," he said, with a look of surprise, "you don't want to go there." He made the slightest gesture of distaste. "There are so many finer things to see in the city.") And the two of us, in our bright-colored American clothes, were as out of place in this drab community of black as though we had worn shoes of silver and hats of gold.

We pushed on. The address we sought turned out to be a courtyard entrance, with two great pitted wooden doors nearly twice as high as a man. The door on the right had a smaller one cut in it, with a lock of its own. We stepped through, and found ourselves in a rectangular court, perhaps one hundred and fifty feet deep and half as wide. Its three sides—the doors and the entrance

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were the fourth—were formed by porchless tenements jammed side by side, all facing inward and all four stories high. Under our feet the cobblestones, some of them bigger than a man's head, were smooth and rounded. A multitude of dark passageways and doors yawned upon us. Children crouched in doorways playing games with stones, and about the court, where fugitive shafts of sunlight fell, women sat nursing their babies from uncovered breasts. Scattered at the far end of the court, standing desolately end up, were a number of two-wheeled wooden push-carts.

THE tempo of the court altered subtly the moment we appeared. Everyone stopped what he was doing and looked at us. From windows on the upper floor women leaned on mattresses hung out for airing, and stared down at us. They shouted across to their neighbors. Presently nearly every window framed a curious face. The children's chattering died away, and since no one moved, we walked hesitantly toward the nearest woman, who sat crouched on a box with a tattered shawl about her head and a nursing baby at her breast.

"Can you help us," I began awkwardly. "We come from America."—"*Amerikaner!*" a woman shouted from the window.—"We are looking for a woman, Surah, the black one from Warsaw, is her name. She married a man named Yankel Myerovitch, but he has died. Is there a Surah from Warsaw here?"

Surah? The woman looked about at the small crowd now surrounding us. Did anyone know a Surah? A Surah, the black one, who was married to Yankel Myerovitch, a Surah from Warsaw?

A thin boy in knee-pants, a beard just beginning to show, murmured, "I am Yankel Myerovitch."

"No, no!" another woman cried. "Don't be a lummox. This is a grown man with a beard who is dead. But your father!" She advanced on him. "He should know. Go quick, ask your father."

"No," said the boy, and he drew back abashed.

"Go, go!" the woman insisted, and running to him, she turned him about by the shoulders and pushed him sharply.

The other children giggled. The boy turned red and shook himself free. "No," he mumbled stubbornly under his breath. "My father's name is Shmuel. Why do you bother me? Let me alone!"

An old man, patriarchal in appearance, came forward. The others moved aside for him. "Surah, the black one from Warsaw? A Surah Myerovitch?" He repeated the name slowly, turning it back and forth on his tongue. "I have lived in this court a long, long time," he said doubtfully. "But I can't remember the name. Perhaps you can say what manner of woman she was?"

So we told him what we knew of the story of Surah; of her former home in Warsaw, and before that in Skiernowicz and Rava; of her husband now dead; of the man whom she had married but whose name we did not know; of the ten-year-old address we had brought with us from America.

"It's too bad," he said, and shook his head sadly. "That young ones should cross the ocean. . . ." He brightened. "The concierge, he knows everyone down to the littlest child who has lived here in the last fifteen years, he will come tomorrow—"

"Tomorrow will be too late," we told him. "We must take the nine o'clock train for Prague tonight. There are people waiting there for us." Nothing else was to be done here; reluctantly we turned away. "We'll come back late this afternoon. Perhaps somebody will remember then." The children, giggling and snickering at a safe distance, trooped after us as we went out.

Once on the main street again, we chose a side alley at random. The number of children behind us increased. We paused before an old man sunning himself in a chair in front of a tenement house. On impulse, we asked our question. Again doorways, alleys, passageways sprouted men, women, and children, the women running eagerly, the children halting their games in the street, and everyone pressing about us.

Now a little old woman came bustling

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forward. The shining brown wig she wore contrasted sharply with her wrinkled face. She had a friend, she said excitedly—"there, across the street, in that corner"—who had recently come from Warsaw. Her friend, she assured us, knew all the Warsawers; indeed, she was a miracle, a walking record of newcomers and visitors. At once, like the wind, she would bring her to us; and away she hurried, drawing her black cloth shawl closer about her thin shoulders.

The old man tapped me gently on the shoulder. Please, he said politely, with a little bow, would we not come upstairs to his home? We must have some tea and cookies while we waited. It was unseemly to stand thus in the street amid such a hubbub. The cookies had been baked only yesterday, for the Sabbath tomorrow: he would be honored to have us under his roof. No, we said, thanking him: we had only a little time. The crowd grew. People pushed forward. They examined our faces and stared at our clothes. And what about America? What had we to say of America? Surely it could not be true that conditions were also bad in America? How was that possible? Here, another old woman pushed her way forward, her thin, hatchet-like face pathetically eager. Would we please tell her son, who lived in Chi-ca-go, to send her money? She pleaded before us, tears beginning to stream down her face. It had been six months and more since he had sent her any money—and then only five dollars, a veritable nothing.

"Look," she cried, spreading out her skirt with her hand. "This he sent me and if he had not, I should go naked in the streets! I, his mother!" And she clapped her hands to her face and wept loudly.

The others looked on in commiseration. Someone said bitterly, "When they go to America and grow rich like Korach they forget their poor ones in Poland."

The crowd continued to increase. We could hear on its outskirts those who knew telling latecomers the news: a young couple from America searching for a relative; and then the repetition of the name, as though it were a Cabalistic charm: "Surah, Surah the black one from Warsaw."

The crowd moved restlessly. Self-appointed messengers darted from doorway to doorway, bustling with the news; women flew from house to house, rousing Rachel, who had once lived in Warsaw, Max who journeyed to Warsaw every month without fail. A tall, buxom girl pushed her way determinedly through to us, and faced us, arms akimbo. Her large dark eyes fastened upon ours intently.

"What do you want her for?" she demanded without preface. "How much money do you bring her?"

We stared at her, astonished and embarrassed for our clothes, for our homes in America, for our remarkably good fortune and charmed lives. Anger at her presumption faded away, and I was beginning to hunt awkwardly for a reply when at this moment one of the old women returned, elbowing her way excitedly to us and bringing in tow another old woman whom she held by the wrist in a grip of steel.

"The name, the name, what was the name?" the old woman in the lead demanded breathlessly, her free hand cupped to her ear. We replied patiently. "And the name of the husband who died?" Question and answer, question and answer—but alas, this was not the Surah we sought. The old woman brought so hurriedly to the scene loosed the clawlike grasp on her wrist and smiled, a little foolishly. Ah, well, for a moment. . . . It was good, no matter. Someone would be happy.

Another envoy came running, her wig slightly awry. She was sure she knew the Surah we sought. She knew it. Yes, this one had been born near the barracks, as we had once been told. Yes, she was married, her husband had passed away, she had come to Lodz from Warsaw, she had married again. A man ten years older than herself. "Come, come," she whispered hoarsely, almost beside herself. "I'll take you right there, this very minute."

We followed her and behind us trooped the entire street of children. They laughed

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and shrieked and ran ahead of us, and stopped behind, and shouted to one another; they swarmed over the street, toys in their hands, crying out and running in every direction. We crossed a wide business thoroughfare, and a few of the littlest were left behind, dancing in their impatience and frustration on the other side. But the rest followed, and like the Pied Piper, we moved on toward Surah.

Our guide hurried us into a court, closing the wooden doors firmly behind her. She ran with quick, short steps over the cobblestones and into a dark hallway, and scurried up two flights of wooden stairs, dark and creaking. We hurried after her. A turn in the thick gloom of the hall, and a door half-ajar. Our guide pushed it open. We saw a dark-walled, cavelike room. The air buzzed with flies. There was an odor of sour milk, strangely mixed with the definite odor of leather. In one corner an old man with a straggly gray beard was hammering on a shoe drawn upon a last. Heavy, high-topped shoes were in profusion all about him. And near him an old woman in sweater and apron was bending over a table, laboriously kneading dough. At our entrance she turned.

Our guide placed herself in front of us and, with her hand pressed against her heart, tried to catch her breath.

"You are Surah from Warsaw and your first husband, may he rest in peace, was by name Yankel Myerovitch?" she asked triumphantly, the words tumbling over each other in her eagerness.

The woman came toward us slowly, wiping her hands on her apron and looking at us with a puzzled expression. Vaguely she seemed to resemble my grandmother.

"Yes," she said hesitantly. "Yes. . . ."

"You had a sister Leah who went to America?"

The woman drew back, suddenly white.

As gently as I could, I said:

"We are from America. I am Leah's grandson."

At this she started back until she sat down hard upon a bench against the wall. Tears began to well into her eyes. All at once she clasped her hands before her with a loud clap and began to weave back and forth.

"Oh, oh!" she cried piercingly. "Oh, that I should live to see the grandson of Leah! That he should come to see me from America. From the dead they come, from the dead! Oh! Oh!" She rose convulsively and began beating her fists on her forehead. "Oh God, I am dizzy, I am dizzy. I am sick. Oh God, what is happening to me!" We came forward, but she drew back, wailing. She reeled backward in circles, stumbling against the wall, the benches, the wooden table, her hands covering her face, sobbing and catching her breath and sobbing again.

Her husband sat speechless, as though paralyzed, his hand holding the hammer upraised in the air.

Then the spell broke. The old man carefully placed the hammer on the floor beside him and rose, dusting off the leather apron he wore. "Surah!" he said. "Why do you carry on so? They are here and you should be happy."

He came toward us. Surah began fanning herself with her hand, breathing quickly, shaking her head hysterically from side to side. "I know," she gasped. "I am happy, I am too happy to live. But only leave me alone for a minute." And then, with her hands over her face once more, "Oh Leah, my sweet one, Leah!"

The old man took my hand in a hearty grip. "Welcome," he said, and with a slow movement of his other hand indicated the room. "We have no palace, but we swear it—you could not be more welcome if you came flying from Heaven itself."

Our guide, who had been observing all this with sheer delight, ran over to Surah, who was now sitting staring at us, opening her mouth and closing it again, as though she hunted words to express herself. "I was telling them, I told them!" our guide fairly shouted in her face. "'I know Surah,' I said. 'Come with me,' I said. 'Do I know Surah, Surah the black one from Warsaw? Like my own sister I know her!'" As she spoke she was straightening Surah's sweater,

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smoothing down her wig, and comforting her. "I said—"

But Surah rose and came toward us, taking my hand in hers and holding it tightly. "Let me look at you," she said. "Leah's grandson! I would know you anywhere," she said. "I would pick you out of a sea of people. You are Leah all over again—you are one face with her."

And now she could not ask questions fast enough. How was my grandmother? How had she appeared when I saw her? How had I known where to find her, Surah? "Oh, I have had bad years, I have had a lot such as I would not wish upon my worst enemy!" She was a slight woman, and thin. She must have been at least six years younger than my grandmother, but the woman who stood before me, the tears still wet on her dark, leathery cheeks, looked much older. "I would have known yours among a thousand faces," she repeated over and over again. "Leah's mouth, Leah's eyes, I see Leah herself before me!"

There were noises and voices behind us, and we turned around. The doorway was packed with staring men and women, and behind them we could see others. The old cobbler gravely brought us stools and bade us sit down, and Surah darted through a curtain which divided this room from a second, and returned with a plate of cookies. "Eat, eat, my darling ones," she insisted. "Under my roof all is good." We protested that we had eaten, but she would not listen. While we nibbled, the old woman who had been our guide bustled from person to person, clutching the long lapels of the men's gaberdines, smoothing the shawls upon the women as she chattered, "Like little birds they stand in the street, looking, and I brought them here! Surah they wanted, and God be thanked, He sent me to them. From America they find their way here!"

THE room was in constant confusion. Surah pushed the curtains aside and pinned them back so that there would be more space. I looked around, suddenly conscious of the flies. I had to keep my hands almost in constant motion before my face to fight them off. Their buzz was low and continuous, as though some far-off dynamo was sending its hum through the building. The curtains opened on a bedroom, and I saw the bed, and jammed against it, a high wooden clothespress. A dish on the floor under the bed caught my attention, and I stared at it for a moment before I realized that it contained butter—placed there, probably, as the coolest and safest spot in the apartment. There was a window, but no screen, and on the windowsill stood a large milk bottle half filled. A calendar, specked with black, hung motionless on one wall. There was no breeze. I felt hot and uncomfortable.

About us now sat dark, bearded men with gleaming eyes, and their sons. Women with wigs and shawls. Wizened old women with sharp noses and tiny eyes almost lost in wrinkles, watching us. I had never seen so many old women in any city before. Another woman, weeping softly. She had a son in America.

"The day after tomorrow is Green Sunday," said Surah's husband, playing with his fingers on the table. "They have told us all to remain inside the courts. The young Poles will march outside and shout insults at us, and if one of us so much as shows himself, they will say that he threw a stone and began a fight, and they will be on us."

Another man spoke up. "Everyone knows of the hard lot of the Jews in Germany," he said. "We suffer, but our story is not so well known. Only last week fifteen Jewish children were poisoned. A woman came to them as they were coming from *cheder*—a well-dressed woman who spoke like a lady to them—and gave them poisoned candy. A whole family escaped poisoning a few weeks ago. They found a washwoman who put poison in their food. A dog ate some of the food first and became sick. So they were spared."

For hours we sat without once leaving our chairs. We talked, and nibbled on cookies, and showed snapshots, and listened. People continued to crowd into the room, staring at

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us, whispering to each other without daring to take their eyes from us, nodding with heartfelt assent when we spoke of this or that. "Ah," they said, "see, even in America they know how things are." Those who had seats listened to us, their chins resting on their hands, entranced. Sometimes they listened disbelieving but courteous. Hard times in America? Impossible. Was not money sent to them all, money and clothes and photographs: everybody in those photographs was rich. They all wore silk; the men looked like veritable princes, the women like the great ladies of Warsaw. But when the discussion veered to them, they could only shake their heads.

"What will happen here?" asked Surah's husband, and he spread his hands eloquently. "What will come, I do not know." Again he drummed with his fingers on the table. "But it's coming now."

It was quite dark when we finally rose, made our ceremonious farewells to all in the room, and departed. Surah and her husband walked with us down the same frantic street we had come through earlier—now subdued with the Sabbath upon it—to the corner where we once more prepared to step back into the new world. Around the corner the trolleys passed, and as we walked, slowly, we could think of many things. It was a soft summer dusk now, and the heat of the day had long since gone. But the open sewers raised their odors to the heavens. I must have made a grimace and uttered an exclamation, because Surah, walking with quick little steps beside us, looked up and asked, "It smells?" I said yes, uncomfortably.

"They never fix the streets here," she said. "Not here."

The train taking us to Prague that night flew swiftly through fragrantly scented farm land. Lodz seemed far away. It was a long time before I could calm myself, before I could blot out with sleep the sight of Surah waving after us as the trolley drew away.

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THE SOLDIER AND HIS GIRL

A Story

SYLVIA ROTHCHILD

THE ringing woke Estelle at ten o'clock on Sunday morning. She stumbled half asleep to the door but found no one there. The ringing continued and she hurried to the phone that was hidden under a heap of bills and old newspapers in the kitchen cupboard. Before the receiver had reached her ear she heard Sid say, "Hi, did I wake you?"

Estelle pulled a kitchen chair over to the phone and said, "Good morning."

"Look, I'm in the army," he said. "I came in from Camp Dix late last night. Thought I'd see you today, but I have to stay home with the family. You wouldn't want to come here, would you?"

She said, "Sure," feeling that he had wanted her to say no. "Why didn't you write to me?" she asked. "I didn't know what happened to you."

"I don't write," he said. "Wait a minute, will you?" She looked at her fingernails, which were bitten down to half moons, while she waited for him to come back to the phone.

"If you're coming here, you better come to dinner. Around two o'clock. We're on Eastern Parkway, near Utica Avenue." She wrote the number he gave her on the edge of a piece of newspaper.

When he hung up, she sat down on the edge of her bed and put her hair up in pin curls. She heard her mother at the door before she was done and opened it for her. Her mother's arms were laden with paper bags. The odor of fresh rolls filled the kitchen.

"I'm going out this afternoon," she said as if talking to herself.

"Where?" asked her mother.

"To Sid's house. I'm having dinner with his family."

"Thank God," said her mother.

"It doesn't mean anything."

"Did I say it means anything?" her mother answered. "But did you have to cry all week? Who is he that you should cry for him?"

"All right Ma, all right."

"But I'm asking, do you know yet what he does for a living?"

"He's a bookkeeper."

"Where?"

"I don't know where. What difference does it make, where."

"I don't know, Estelle. I don't see how a boy can come into a house three times a week half a year and never say a word to anyone. What are we, wild animals that will bite him?"

Estelle's mother poured some coffee for her and watched while she took nibbles out of a sweet bun and turned the pages of the Sunday paper. When Estelle was finished she carried the dishes to the sink and took out a nail file and some polish. She painted her fingernails and toenails carefully and then sat waiting for them to dry.

When she went back to her bedroom

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER, great lady of the American short story, is only one of many readers who have been excited by the fine talent displayed in the stories of SYLVIA ROTHCHILD, since they first began to appear in these pages a year ago. "The Soldier and His Girl" is the fourth, having been preceded by "The Mothers" (October 1951), "My Mrs. Schnitzer" (May 1952), and "The Golden Years" (February 1952). Mrs. Rothchild lives in Sharon, Massachusetts; she was a social worker in a number of agencies (one of the few without a graduate degree) before retiring to be a housewife and mother (of two).

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her mother was making the bed. Estelle took some clothes out of her closet and held them up against herself critically. She tried on first a blue suit and then a brown checked one. "Which is better, Ma?" she asked.

"They're both nice," her mother said. Estelle looked at them for another minute and decided on the blue one. She washed slowly, and left a trail of powdery footsteps in the bathroom and the hallway. The scent of toilet water and face powder followed her wherever she went.

Her mother looked her over when she had finished dressing. "You look nice. Don't worry how you look." Her lips brushed Estelle's forehead quickly, "For good luck." She followed Estelle out into the hallway. "When do you think you'll be home?"

"Maybe late. We may go out in the evening from his house."

"Be careful, Estelle," she said solicitously, but her daughter stopped her with an outraged "Ma," and she could not tell whether it was the anger of acquiescence or defiance.

"I'm not a baby, Ma. I'm twenty years old."

ESTELLE took the subway for the three stations. The ride was shorter than she expected. When she came out of the train, it was only half past one. She stopped to look in the mirrors of all the gum-vending machines she passed, wondering at each one whether she should have worn a hat. It looked so formal, she was tempted to carry it. But she left it on. The sun was warm outside, and the air glistened so that she blinked when she came out of the darkness. The trees on Eastern Parkway were covered with tiny leaves, still bright green and waxy. She walked a few blocks in the opposite direction and turned in time to come to his house at five minutes to two.

Estelle rang the bell in the outer hall and walked noisily across the tiled floor to the self-service elevator. When she came out on the third floor, Sid was waiting for her. He put his arms around her and they stood close together until they heard a doorknob turning somewhere in the hall. No door opened but they moved apart and Sid opened the door to his family's apartment. He took her hat and pocketbook and she looked at him carefully. She thought he looked younger in his army shirt, even thinner than usual, but less serious.

Sid's two older sisters and their husbands were in the living room. Sally and Marian both looked like Sid, narrow-boned, dark-haired, with sharp-featured intense faces. Estelle was confused by the brothers-in-law. They were introduced so quickly that she didn't know which was Morty and which was Sam. They sat together on the couch, sharing the sports section of the paper, and said "Hi" without getting up. Sid's father and mother came out of the kitchen together and Sid introduced Estelle.

"What do you think of Sid going in the army?" Marian, the younger sister, asked Estelle. "Some surprise."

Estelle nodded.

"Come in. Sit down," Sally said. Estelle sat down in the chair closest to her.

"Show your girl your uniform Sid," Sally said. "She'll never know you with the broad shoulders. Go on, take your jacket out."

Sid left the room and came back quickly wearing a visored cap that reached almost to his eyebrows and a jacket much too large for him. He came in stiffly, bowed low, pulled the jacket in back to make it fit, and shouted, "Hut, two, three, four, hut, two three four."

"Not so loud, Michael's sleeping," Sally warned, but he marched on his heels all the way through the living room, to the foyer, and back through the dining alcove. He stopped in the middle of the living room, pretended to drop his rifle and pick it up. He bent forward at a precarious angle and leaned on the imaginary rifle with his mouth hanging open and his eyes crossed. His sisters and their husbands bent over and shook with laughter. Estelle, not knowing what else to do, laughed with them. Their laughter made him sillier and sillier and his faces were more dreadful each min-

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ute. When he stopped and stood with his hand on the piano, waiting for the others to stop laughing, they only laughed harder. Then Estelle saw his mother standing behind him in the doorway that led to the kitchen. Tears rolled down her cheeks and she said, "Look, look what they're sending to war."

Sid's father took her arm from behind and said almost sternly, "Not now Annie, not now. This is not the time." He pulled her into the kitchen and a few minutes later, when the others in the living room were still gasping with laughter, he called out, "Come and get it, everybody."

THE table in the alcove next to the kitchen was laden with food. The napkins were buried under the plates and the silverware hung over the edge of the cloth. They took each other's glasses and silverware and didn't know the difference. There was chopped herring and chopped liver and chicken soup and stuffed fish and olives and pickles, even grapefruit that Estelle discovered after the dishes were taken away to make room for the tea. Long after they had all had enough to eat, there was roast chicken, potato and noodle puddings, *kashe* with gravy, and finally applesauce and sponge cake. Sid's father pressed wine, beer, and soda water on everyone all through the meal. "Have something," he begged. "This is on Sid. Have a little more, it will give you an appetite."

Estelle sat next to Sid, her knee touching his, wondering how the others would move from the table after consuming so much food. "I'm going to burst," said one of the brothers-in-law. "Why did you make so much, Ma?"

"No one forced you. You didn't have to eat so much," she said drily.

"Now there's a girl for you," said Sid's father pointing to Estelle. "She'll make a good wife. She doesn't eat anything. Someone will save a lot of money on her some day."

The daughters helped carry the dishes to the sink and Estelle moved to help them but Sid's father took her arm and gently pushed her toward the living room. "Company doesn't wash dishes," he said. "Sit down."

The two brothers-in-law left the house. "They're going over to our apartment to watch the ball game on television," Sally said. Sid went to answer the phone and came back to say, "I have to run down the street for a minute. I'll be right back." He squeezed Estelle's hand and hurried to the door.

"Where's he going?" his mother asked. She came into the living room with her apron on and her hands wet. A few strands of hair were loose from the bun she wore at the nape of her neck.

"Why didn't you ask him?" her husband asked.

She shrugged her shoulders and raised her brows as if to say, who can ask Sid anything.

"Sit down Annie. You worked enough already. You have plenty helpers in there. Take off your apron and fix your hair."

She took her apron off and dried her hands on it. Then she made a vain effort to tuck the straying hairs back with the others. She sat down on the edge of the chair, gingerly, as if she were not accustomed to sitting. After a long silent minute she turned to Estelle and asked, "Do you know where Sid is stationed?"

"At Camp Dix," Estelle said. "Didn't you know?"

"Camp Dix?" she said slowly. "Where is Camp Dix?"

"In New Jersey."

"New Jersey isn't far away," she said as if she were asking a question.

"No, it's not far," said Estelle. "Why didn't Sid tell you?"

"Sid is a funny boy. He doesn't talk. We never know where he goes, what he does. He doesn't tell us and it's hard to ask him. If he wants, he answers us but he doesn't tell us anything. Do you know what I mean?"

Estelle nodded.

"Do you think he even told us he was going in the army? A week and a half ago

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he says I'm going. Doesn't say where. Oh how much aggravation he gives us."

"What are you complaining to her for?" Sid's father asked. "It's her fault?"

"I'm not complaining. I'm just talking."

She touched Estelle's shoulder and said, "I'm very glad to see you Estelle. I'm glad you came."

Sid's father left the room, and as if she had been waiting for him to go, she stood up quickly and took a photograph album, almost four inches thick, from the top of the piano. "Do you want to look?" she asked.

She put the open book half on Estelle's lap, half on her own. It was heavy, even with the weight divided. At the beginning there were pictures of herself and her family. They wore bathing suits or wedding dresses, long formal suits with fur pieces and plumed hats, dresses covered with beads. They posed in Monticello, at Sharon Springs, leaning on a gate at a farm, at Coney Island, in front of an apartment house in Manhattan. It was exactly like the album Estelle had at home, even the few foreign pictures from Poland, with plain, sad faces, funny haircuts, and sack-like homemade clothes. Estelle looked at the pictures but was listening all the time for the door to open. When they came to Sid's pictures, she paid more attention. She looked thoughtfully at the fat naked child that smiled from each page. First in his mother's arms, then on his father's shoulder, his sister's lap. He was lying on a leopard skin, grinning broadly, and then the baby pictures ended. It was as if he had not existed for the next ten years. Then there was a Boy Scout picture with Sid's face circled, and his Bar Mitzvah pictures. He stood alone in one, with the same face he still had, serious except for the mouth that looked as if it had swallowed a smile. The prayer shawl hung smoothly without creases and the prayer book was closed in his hand. Opposite this was a picture of Sid standing between his grandparents. His grandmother had the same full mouth and black brows that his mother had but she wore a wig and a long-sleeved dress with the skirt down to her ankles. She was a head shorter than Sid. His grandfather was almost as tall as he. The old man with the short pointed beard and the young boy resembled each other. Estelle first looked at the picture to be polite but she kept staring at it, trying to see what features they had in common. Sid's mother seemed pleased at her interest.

"My mother died only two months later," she said. "My father passed away seven years ago. Sid was the apple of his eye," she said, her eyes filling. "I wonder what he would say to his going in the army. And Sid is so pleased to go. It's a joke to him. If only he weren't so anxious to go, it wouldn't hurt me so much. It's as if he wanted to run away from us all."

"I can't get over it, somehow," she continued. "In the old country, my father moved heaven and earth to keep out of the army. My husband came to America and *my* son goes."

"What are you telling the girl, Mama?" Sid's father asked from the foyer door. "This isn't Russia or Poland or Austria. In America you go to the army if they call you. What's the matter with you?"

"I know," she said humbly.

"If you know, then what do you want? Why are you so foolish? Your son went to school here; we make a living here; we have a nice house and all the food we can eat. We have the best, the best of everything, and if you have to go to war, you go."

"And if you don't want to go?"

"If you don't want to go, then you sit in jail, so stop the woman's talk."

Sid's mother moved to get up and Estelle helped her put the opened album on the couch. She went to the window and waited there until she saw Sid coming into the house. She went to the door to meet him. It opened as she came to the foyer and the two brothers-in-law came in, laughing and jostling each other. Estelle had decided which was Morty and which was Sam at the dinner table, but she forgot again, they

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looked so much alike, both heavy and tall, with round pink faces and eyeglasses. They passed Estelle and went into the living room. She opened the door for Sid. They stood close together in the foyer while he took his jacket off. She thought she could feel her heart beating and her face flushing.

"We won't stay long," he whispered. "I just made some plans for tonight."

Sid noticed the open album as soon as he came into the room. "Why do you have to take that thing out for, Ma? Can't a man have any privacy?"

"What's so private about an album?" she asked innocently. "We were just looking at your Bar Mitzvah pictures and I couldn't help wonder what your *zaydeh* would think about your going to the army."

"What he would think? What can he think?" her husband said. "The world is different than he left it. Why do you have to repeat the same thing over and over. It's time to be still about it already."

"What are you screaming at her for, Pa?" one of the sisters called from the kitchen.

"Look Ma," Sid said. "You wanted me to stay home today. I'm home. But if you're going to spend the afternoon crying over me, I'll never stay home again."

"Don't do me any favors," his mother said. "I just want to tell your father one thing. A war is still shooting and killing. It's not a pleasure trip for summer. And it's not a joke for a boy to go away."

One of the sons-in-law, who had been sitting, staring blankly into space, suddenly came to life. "What are you talking? You know what you're talking?"

They all turned to look at him.

"I spent three years in the army, remember? Maybe I wasn't such a marvelous soldier, but I was there. Let me tell you. I had a friend, a kid maybe twenty-two years old, left a pregnant wife some place in Iowa, Idaho, some place, God knows."

"So," his wife asked, her voice rising and falling with the single word.

"Let me talk a minute. You can't start a story in the middle," he answered. She made a wry face and fidgeted in her chair. He continued.

"Anyway at the beginning, this guy, I can't even remember his name, he wasn't any more of a shooter than I was. We both were always running and hiding, scared out of our pants. Then one day I see he's shooting and a little later, he's not only shooting, he's enjoying himself."

"OK, so come to the point," his wife prodded.

"The point is, you get used to it, like anything else."

"Tell me, Morty, you got used to it too?" his mother-in-law asked.

"Sure," he said. "Sure I got used to it. I'll tell you another thing. One day at the very end, we were some place in Germany, this same fellow and I. I don't remember if we were on patrol or just wasting time, when we saw some enemy soldiers. They were far away but not too far. This guy shoots and I shoot after him. It was no different than shooting ducks on the boardwalk at Coney Island. It's just like anything else, like I said, after a while you get used to it." His wife buried her face in a copy of *Life* magazine and nobody answered him.

"But the funny thing," Mort went on, "is that later we found that the war was over and we didn't even have to shoot them. But it didn't bother us much."

Sid sat next to Estelle on the couch, curling her hair with his finger. Waves of love and sleepiness flowed over her.

"But what was the good of it then?" Sid asked. Estelle was surprised to hear him. She thought he wasn't even listening.

"It's not a question of the good of it. It's how it is. That's what I'm telling you."

"Sure Mort," his wife said. "We know you get used to it." She kicked her foot rhythmically to some music singing itself in her head. "You can get used to anything. Who knows better than I?"

"Well," said Sid's mother. "Your grandfather was nobody's fool but he didn't believe in fighting."

"What do you mean, didn't believe in

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fighting? He was probably scared," Morty said belligerently.

"My father wasn't scared, Morty," Sid's mother said quietly. "If you were half as brave as he, you would have nothing to worry about. I can remember as if it were yesterday, and it was almost fifty years ago, that someone broke into our house. My father filled his hands with sand and threw it in the man's face. He was twice my father's size, but my father beat him with a stick, with a stick mind you, not a gun, until he nearly killed him. I and my brothers and sisters looked out from the corners where we were hiding with our mouths open. Even then we knew that for him, fighting was the worst thing in the world. He couldn't even spank his own children. If a fly came into the house, he would open the door and chase it out rather than kill it."

"Are you talking about *zaydeh*, the little old guy?" Sam asked.

"Yes, that's who I mean. He came to your wedding, remember?"

"And you, Pa? Were you ever in the army?" Morty asked Sid's father.

"Me? I was in Rumania. Why should I go in the army? For the two cents a day they paid? For the black coffee and hard bread they gave the soldiers? You think it's today? They chased us from one place to another. We never had a decent place to lay our heads. My father's house was one room with a dirt floor. Ten children in one room. What can you understand? I'm proud to have my son fight for America. How can you appreciate anything when you don't know how it was?"

"And you can't appreciate without sending young men out to kill each other? To send them away in their best years?" Sid's mother asked. "What do you get for such appreciation? A nice thank you, from whom?"

"I'm ashamed to listen to you," her husband said, and left the room.

"Don't take it so seriously, Ma. The world isn't coming to an end," the older daughter said.

"What shall I do then? Shall I laugh with you? Laugh! I'll laugh too when you explain what is accomplished every few years with the fighting. Their minds are all changed, all those in the cemeteries?"

"What are you worrying for? It's not time yet to worry. Sid will probably spend all his army days behind a desk anyway," the younger sister said.

"And if not Sid, who are the others, they're not mothers' sons?"

"See children, how good your mother is?" Sid's father said, standing in the doorway. "Her own children aren't enough to worry about. She worries about everyone, everywhere. The whole world is her problem."

Estelle thought that Sid's mother was going to cry, but she stood up slowly and took a box of chocolates from the top of the piano. She carried it around the room, offering it, "My Mother's Day candy," she said to Estelle.

ESTELLE and Sid left soon afterward. The sisters and their husbands remained. Sid had borrowed a car from a friend and they drove out of the city to a place he knew of for dancing. It took almost two hours to get there, because he wasn't sure of the way. When they finally found the night club, it was crowded. Their table was far from the orchestra and not close enough to the windows to enjoy the cool air. They ordered sandwiches and rum cokes and left their table to dance. The music was slow, but they cut the time in half, taking careful, measured steps around the other dancers. Estelle felt as if she were floating, hardly touching the floor at all. Sid stared at her while they danced, meeting her eyes again and again until she hid her face in his shoulder.

They danced until the music stopped before the entertainment began. From their table they saw only the heads of the Spanish dancers and nothing at all of the comedian and the juggler. But they remained until the dance music began again. They came out into the cool moist air a little before midnight. Sid drove slowly,

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still uncertain of the way. They stopped for a while to look at the moonlight shining on the Hudson and then they continued home, stopping frequently to ask for directions.

Estelle was home at half past two. Sid kissed her quickly in the hallway and hurried out to the car. When she opened the door she heard her mother turning in bed and knew she had been waiting up for her. The morning seemed like a week ago. She felt so tired that she wondered how she had remained awake so long. She took her clothes off quickly and fell asleep without even washing her face.

AT SEVEN o'clock Estelle turned the alarm off and pushed her face deeper into the pillow. She awoke at noon, with her mouth dry and her hair in snarls. Her mother looked at her coldly as she came into the kitchen. "What do you want for breakfast?" she asked. "Or are you still full from yesterday?"

"Fried eggs," said Estelle.

"I don't mean to mix in your affairs," her mother said without looking at her. "But tell me what kind of girl comes home nearly three o'clock in the morning when she has to go to work the next day?"

"Sid's in the army. He only had one day off."

"He's in the army so you can't go to work; is there at least a ring in the proposition?"

"I told you yesterday there wasn't. He's in the army. I don't even know when I'll see him again. Look Ma, please let me alone."

"That makes it better? Now he goes away, without promises, nothing. I hope you had a good time."

"I did," said Estelle. "The best time I ever had."

When Estelle was dressed and ready to leave for work, her mother asked, "What kind of family does he have? Did they make you feel welcome at least?"

Estelle stopped at the door and shrugged her shoulders, "A family, like anybody else."

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BREAD WITH SALT

A Group of Poems

CHARLES REZNIKOFF

I

Thou shalt eat bread with salt and thou shalt drink water by measure, and on the ground shalt thou sleep and thou shalt live a life of trouble. . . . The Mishnah, *Aboth* 6:4.

SALMON and red wine
and a cake fat with raisins and nuts:
no diet for a writer of verse
who must learn to fast
and drink water by measure.

Those of us without house and ground
who leave tomorrow
must keep our baggage light:
a psalm, perhaps, a dialogue—
brief as Lamech's song in *Genesis*,
even Job among his friends—
but no more.

Like a tree in December
after the winds have stripped it
leaving only trunk and limbs
to ride and outlast
the winter's blast.

II

SCRAP of paper
blown about the street,
you would like to be cherished, I suppose,
like a bank-note.

III

A WELL-PHRASED eulogy, low-pitched dirge,
faces politely sad
before the expensive, well-polished coffin;

a thick green cloth about the deep grave
to keep loose earth
from the sod:

a funeral
punctual, well-mannered, neat.

I see that from the rude young man you were
you have gone far.

IV

AGAIN cool windy days,
gray skies and sidewalks black with rain;
again the solitary walks,
and a quiet room in which to sit and work
and see mankind—
only through a windowpane.

V

IT HAD been snowing at night
and the snow could still be seen
on the roofs, parapets, and water-tanks.
Slowly the sky grew brighter,
the room lighter;
morning came—almost at noon.

VI

Now on our way through the park one meets
birds not unlike the sparrows of our streets
but smaller and colored a softer grey—
without the sparrow's brownish hue
and with a tinge of green, a hint of white:
a soothsayer might read a message in their flight
and I can spell a good omen, too.

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VII

HERE where the bushes are beginning to bud
in the bright sun of March,
a man comes walking stiffly all in black:
grim, grey beard, toes out.

Is this a granite angel that has climbed down from a church?
Michael, perhaps, without his sword?
No, no, my friend, it is only Adam,
too old to plough and Cain and Abel dead.

VIII

THIS added kindness:
as when revisiting a grove
for the symmetry of trunk and twigs
and the beauty of the leaves
we find the trees in flower.

IX

SAINT: After the rain that fell all of last night
the wet street is almost as blue as the sky;
a shining black bird in the grass,
head cocked—
a crafty eye upon me as I pass.

BIRD: I mistrust the shrewd archaic smile
of your saint
in spite of the big book in the crook of his arm
and two fingers raised in blessing.

X

THE park is green and quiet,
except for a bush
with as many white flowers as leaves
and the gardener—crooked leg, malicious eye—
tearing at the weeds.

Beneath the trees
strut robber knights
in black speckled armor:
I know them,
although they look like starlings.

XI

BLUE flowers in the hot sun
and the brown birds flying
through the cool tunnels
between bushes and the ground.

I listen to the chatter of my fellows—
alien as a bird:
who cares, who cares?

I see their smiles
but am the silent dog that hurries on,
nose to the ground,
busy about his own affairs.

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XII

ANOTHER generation of leaves is lying
on the pavements;
each had a name, I suppose,
known to itself and its neighbors
in every gust of wind.

Now the wind
taking, taking.

XIII

SILENT and sullen, in a bitter debate with the dead—
their sentences still touching his heart like icicles—
stiffly as if he had spent the night
on a park bench;
summer long gone and his shoes—to be worn in summer—
no longer white;

laces not even tied
and the tin tips dragging along the ground
with the thin persistent sound
of an insect's song
as if—in the machine of which they are a part—
something has gone wrong.

XIV

THE nail is lost. Perhaps the shoe;
horse and rider, kingdom, too.

XV

THE dogs that walk with me are Now and Here
and a third dog I do not trust at all,
for he would lead me far into the past
and there I'd lose myself: his name is If.

XVI

MY PARENTS were of a great company
that went together, hand in hand;
but I must make my way alone
over waves and barren land.

My grandfathers were living streams
in the channel of a broad river;
but I am a stream that must find its way
among blocking rock
and through sands and sand.

XVII

BECAUSE, the first-born, I was not redeemed,
I belong to my Lord, not to myself or you:
by my name, in English, I am of His house,
one of the carles—a Charles, a churl;
and by my name in Hebrew which is Ezekiel
(whom God strengthened)
my strength, such as it is, is His.

THE work of CHARLES REZNIKOFF, poet, historian, and novelist, is familiar to the readers of COMMENTARY. His last group of poems appeared in our issue of December 1951.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING MILTON

That Talent Which Is Death to Hide

MILTON KLONSKY

IT'S no use trying to blame or to justify the mortal taste, so long ago, that passed over Morton and Mortimer, Marvin and Melvin, and fixed, irrevocably, on Milton as just right, a name which would become me. It was a bond, not a brand—for what became of me can be traced back to that one fatal choice. Whenever I hear it swelling under and rising above the choir of other names, I feel again identified with "the organ voice of England" (as Tennyson called him)—"Milton! a name to resound for ages!" Descend, Urania!

My mother must have heard the echoes in the boroughs of New York, without knowing their source. She had never read *Paradise Lost, Samson Agonistes, Comus,* or any other works of the poet; Milton seemed to her not only a nice name, but the closest to my deceased grandmother's, Malke. No garland was intended for John Milton. Even among my friends on the block the great name was slanged around in a casual way, nicked and diminished to Milty or, more often, Milt. Who cared? In those days, when the fruit of good and evil was still green, I would plunge frequently into a forest daydream "with native honor clad in naked majesty," where I was known as Bomba the Jungle Boy. And what—the question is laughable—would Bomba have to do with poetry, a pulling girl's game no better than potsy or rope-jumping? If I had been told then that I belonged to the same totem as John Milton, a poet in the 17th century who wore his hair in long curly locks, I would have laughed and plunged back into the forest.

THIS primitive attitude was bound to change, and did, as my own voice lost its shrillness and took on some of the deep undernotes of the organ. During my last year at P. S. 100 in Brooklyn, I became the editor of the 8B3 *Gossip*. I was not only the editor but the production chief, editorial writer, and circulation manager of the *Gossip*, since it was my idea in the first place. In a sense, I *was* the *Gossip*. Of course, most of the creative writing was done by the rest of the class and there was an editorial board consisting mainly of girls but I set the style and policy of the *Gossip* from the start. Only the name was not my own. I would rather have called it the 8B3 *Bugle*, or something with more force, but the board decided otherwise.

With the special privileges granted the editor of the *Gossip*, I could escape the feeling of crib, the ennui, the routine of bells, the mill in the halls, and the endless perspectives of desks which I had endured for eight years. In the morning, while attendance was being taken, I'd sometimes saunter

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WHEN the infant MILTON KLONSKY was given his name, his parents considered they were calling him after his grandmother Malke. But when, in 8B3 at P.S. 100, as editor of the *Gossip* and author of its column of general reflections, "World Events," young Klonsky first tasted the intoxication of literature, he was apprised by a wise teacher of the responsibilities attached to the poet's name he bore. Since then he has carefully cultivated "that one talent which is death to hide," publishing poetry and essays in a number of our better periodicals. Mr. Klonsky was born in New York in 1921 and attended Brooklyn College and Columbia University.

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out past the monitors at the doors into the schoolyard, and watch the blackboard squad, trying to make their job last as long as possible, beating the chalk dust out of felt erasers until the air around them was white. Then, if in the mood, I would walk into the street—always somewhat unreal and romantic between 9 and 3—where, my lungs enlarged by the spirit of freedom, I would light up my cigarette and inhale the divine afflatus. What a lift it gave me! At such times, as though I had taken the food of the gods, I would look down from an enormous height while the blackboard squad picked up their erasers and reluctantly went inside, the monitors shut the doors, and, occasionally, someone late for class would come charging down the street in an open panic, unlaced and unbuttoned. I was above all that. Only the sound of bells ringing vaguely inside could bring me down a little, and I'd go back to my place with class 8B3 and dawdle through the day, still abstracted.

My real work began when school was over. For the sake of the *Gossip,* I might stay in the empty halls as late as 5 P.M. to accept and reject manuscripts, assign reporters, revise copy, set deadlines, and award by-lines. Whatever I said, went. When students from the 8B's, as well as from the lower classes of P.S. 100, came to me with their ideas and compositions for the *Gossip,* I would attend patiently to them all and offer my criticisms. Even if a stickball or punchball game was taking place on the block, I chose to remain at my desk day after day. And yet, behind my back, there were some grudgers, bitches, and malcontents—especially Gloria Lockoff—who said that I, who started the *Gossip* in the first place, was getting to be bossy and conceited! I never bothered to answer them, though I knew who they were, letting my work speak for itself.

Gradually, the shape of the *Gossip* began to emerge from the hodgepodge of contributions, and I saw it was going to be good. On the front page, of course, would be important items such as the Principal's speech in the assembly on citizenship, the results of the intramural sports contests, a report on the P.T.A., and my editorial on "World Events." Then there was an anonymous column called "School Bromides" which listed the boring refrains of the faculty under the subtitle "History Repeats Itself, So Do Teachers." For this I contributed Mr. Stackenfeld's "I remember when I was a boy . . .," Miss Dinkel's "Now this test doesn't count," Miss O'Leary's "You're dealing with Miss O'Leary," and one or two others. Also we had reports on the Cooking Club called "Cook-Coos," the Campers' Club, which had recently hiked to Bear Mountain, the Stamp Club, and the Debating Society. A short story called "Triumph," by David Goldstein, though obviously derived from Grayson in *Garry Grayson His Speed,* had a quality of its own and was accepted.

Most of my trouble came from the book-review section, called "The Bookworm Turns," by Gloria Lockoff. In my opinion, it didn't satisfy the editorial standards of the *Gossip.* But since this Gloria Lockoff was the pet of the library teacher, Mrs. Kohn, and Mrs. Kohn was supposed to be the *Gossip's* faculty adviser, I thought it more politic, in the end, to accept her contributions. Everybody agreed that the *Gossip* should do something for literature; but who, I felt, would be interested in a review of *Il Pagliacci* such as this:

Do actors while amusing a public forget that they are merely dramatizing what someone else's pen has written? Why does Canio, the clown of a troupe of actors, tell Tonio, the head of the troupe, that his wife, Nedda, has made a secret tryst with Silvio, a peasant, when he knows that he is very hot-tempered? Tonio at first does not believe him for he knows that Canio has a lying tongue, but his doubts are soon confirmed for he sees Silvio in the front row of seats with eyes for Nedda alone who looks at him and blushes. Will anyone be able to disentangle this web of hearts? Why not read *Il Pagliacci,* this heart rendering *opera* and find out for yourself the outcome of this tragedy? The *Tales of the Opera* are to be found in the music shelf of our library.

We even had to take a second review by Gloria Lockoff on Richard Harding Davis's "In the Fog," which wasn't much better.

What had happened to Lord Chetney? Nobody knew. Suddenly a report was received: "Lord Chetney found dead with Princess Zicky, in a house with furnishings of Russian origin, location unknown." Reported by Lieut. Sears, an American, who was found in the vicinity of

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the police station wandering about apparently lost in the London fog. Who had committed this atrocious murder and then vanished, swallowed up in the fog, leaving only a trail of blood behind him? Was the Princess Zicky only an imposter who, preying upon rich men's purses, suddenly met her fate, killed by one of her recent admirers, whom she had stripped of every vestige of honor, and now, seeing her entertaining someone else, had returned to commit this ghastly deed? Nobody knew. Who was the Queen's messenger? Was it not queer that nobody had ever seen or heard of him before? I cannot answer these questions as skillfully as the author, so why not read "In the Fog" by Richard Harding Davis which you will find in the book called *Fourteen Great Detective Stories*.

I insisted, however, that we publish a report by our sports editor, Edwin Kanner, on the final game in the P. S. 100 baseball tournament between 8B2 and 8B3, even though we lost. It was a game in which I played right field.

Spectators went wild with excitement, and dazzled by the form of the players, waited anxiously for the beginning of the 8B3-8B2 championship game. Mr. Stackenfeld, athletic director, called the captains of the two teams together. 8B2 luckily won the toss and chose to be last up at bat. In the first inning, 8B3 with bases loaded and one man out, realized that they had a chance to score. 8B2's pitcher turned nervously around to see if his team was ready. With the shouts of encouragement ringing in his ears, in two successive pitches retired to the side. 8B2 was cheered lustily as they came to bat. By superb playing of 8B3, they were retired scoreless. The second and third innings were scoreless and the crowd murmured to the effect that it was a pitchers' battle. After exceptionally good fielding, 8B2 retired 8B3 in the beginning of the 4th inning. 8B2 with determined thoughts now came to bat. Ben Krakowsky, one of 8B2's star hitters, singled. Heavy hitters then sent Ben around to score 8B2's lone tally. Filled with desperate determination, 8B3 came to bat. Their efforts were futile as 8B2 retired them scoreless and disheartened. The game was over and losers and victors joined lustily in a loud cheer.

When all the copy was in and approved, the Art Squad prepared an emblem for the masthead showing the silhouette of P. S. 100 with "8B3 GOSSIP" in a banner waving across the page. I then took the *Gossip* down to Mrs. Schwartz, the Principal's secretary, who prepared it for mimeographing. Mrs. Schwartz worked all afternoon, typing page after page, while I turned the handle of the mimeograph machine. A poem in tribute to Mrs. Schwartz, written by Vivian Kuskin of 8B3, was printed in a box on the front sheet.

A TRIBUTE

Mrs. Schwartz is the queen
Of the mimi-machine.
When our inspiration was ripe
She worked on the type.
As class 8B3
So thankful are we,
We don't have to be taught
Mrs. Schwartz is a sport!

For me that was a great day, bugled and spangled above all others, when the *Gossip* made its debut in P. S. 100. It was sold in stacks, it was read all over the neighborhood, I was named and acclaimed by everybody. At the school assembly that week, right after the pledge of allegiance to the flag, the Principal himself asked me to stand up again and be introduced. With all the classes in 8B there to witness, I rose—O *Altitudo!*—and walked down the aisle toward the platform, my legs a little stiff and shaky as though I were on stilts, my head in an aureole, looking straight ahead and not turning while friends on all sides whispered "Hey Milty! Hey Milty!" as I passed, until, after a long stretch, I reached the platform and shook hands with the Principal. It was the peak of my eminence.

But within a week, only a few days, it began to crumble, the *Gossip* seemed nearly forgotten, and I found myself on a level with the rest, back at the mill. During lunch hour, I would sometimes see scattered pages of the *Gossip* blowing around the schoolyard, along with old exam papers, pieces of comic sections, and torn sandwich wrappings. I could no longer get outside the building in the morning, to smoke my cigarette, and no one came to me for advice in the afternoon. Yet what hurt almost as much was the indifferent response to my editorial, "World Events," from those who should have known better. In my high days as editor, I had thought of "World Events" as a visionary down-look (so to speak) from

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the top of the masthead. But now, so far had I fallen, I was even told by my history teacher that it showed the bad influence of the editorial page of the *Daily News!*

Without the *Gossip* to sustain me, I would arrive late in the morning and leave as soon as the bell rang. The chafes, contumelies, and all the kid-stuff of school grew more intolerable. Each period the door that shut on the class stifled an open yawn of boredom, and the halls narrowed and narrowed so that I could hardly squeeze my way through to the end of the day. While I sat inside the classroom, my spirit flew out of the window. The teacher had to call my name two or three times before I could return in time to recollect myself. And then, in a daydream, the idea came to me.

"O for that warning voice!"—but no voice was heard. The toad came and squatted, hissing in my ear. From a mere speculative vagary, a speck, the idea bouldered in concreteness and importance until, in the end, it took up all the space in my mind. And one night, at the instigation of Auld Scratch himself, who "set himself in glory above his peers" and "thought to have equalled the most high," I did it. I wrote the following letter to the Principal:

Dear Sir:

I've read the paper put out by the students of P. S. 100, and I've never read a paper as good as the *Gossip*. As a member of the P. T. A., I want to congratulate you. I especially liked the editorial "World Events," which had a real understanding of history.

Yours sincerely,
Mrs. S. Falk

As soon as I had deposited this in the mail box, I felt in my bones the awful knowledge of Will and Fate. I wished I could have undone it, and yet I knew I would have done it again. It was knowledge bought dear, as it always is, by knowing ill. Of course, I considered it very unlikely that the letter would be traced to me—*who's Mrs. Falk?*—but I was irritable with suspense. The next day in class, every time my name was called I heard it at once and winced, expecting to be summoned before the teacher, accused, judged, and sentenced. Only a small abyss separated my desk from the teacher's. And though this day passed like any other, my anxiety remained. By the end of the week, just as I was beginning to feel secure again, an incident occurred during the gym period which was an omen of things to come.

GYM was one class I really disliked. That afternoon it was 8B3's turn to play basketball on the small basement court painted in a flat, peeling, municipal gray, a dim and stuffy place where echoes resounded from side to side like the ghosts of old balls, a place larded as it were with an ancient smell of sneakers and stale underwear. We used to keep the same uniforms in our lockers throughout the term; and the joke, as old as the school, stated that socks were to be changed twice a year—in summer, if they stuck when you threw them against the wall, and in winter, if they stood up by themselves and you had to pull them on like boots. The basketball court itself was hardly large enough for a regulation-sized game, yet thirty or more players would be crowded on the floor. You might sometimes rush around for a whole hour without ever touching the ball. Anyone who managed to get it in his grasp would defend it against anyone else, teammates as well as opponents, since they were all out to take it away.

As it happened, fate tipped the ball into my hands. I bounced it once, looking around for a possible shot at the basket, feinted, and then dribbled sideways down the court, jumped and placed a perfect lay-up right through the hoop. Then the whistle blew. Mr. Stackenfeld, the gym teacher, claimed that I was hacking, holding, and running with the ball! The decision was so unjust, and fell at such a triumphant moment when I had almost recovered my sense of glory, that I threw the ball away, cursed, and burst into tears. I was dismissed from the class.

It did not seem possible that Mr. Stackenfeld's decision against me could have been influenced by the column "School Bromides" printed in the *Gossip*. Yet what other explanation was there? Furthermore, I had never had anything to do with those obscene glyphs and caricatures on the walls of the Boys' Room showing Mr. Stackenfeld with Miss Dinkel, the science teacher, though it was a broad joke throughout P. S. 100. The

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thought of his ingratitude, and my own humiliation, made the Adam's apple swell in my throat. My eyes blurred again, and I plunged into myself conjuring images of revenge and redemption.

By the time I reached the next class, Mrs. Kohn's library period, I was already in such a deep mood that I could hardly emerge to hear her calling my name. But somebody nudged me, pointed, and I crossed the Bar and small abyss that separated us. Mrs. Kohn made me stand and wait while she looked at me steadily without saying a word. Then, turning, she put it on the table.

I took the letter and pretended to read my own unmistakable, Palmer-methodized handwriting, searching for a way out.

"That's a fine letter," I told her.

Mrs. Kohn kept looking at me.

"*Who's Mrs. Falk?*" I said. And felt the jab of a pitchfork in my conscience.

Finally, the teacher spoke. "All right, Milton, that's enough." And then, a little sadly: "You know, I once thought of promoting you to the '1' class."

She was referring to an occasion, the year before, when I had almost been elevated to 8B1, the select class in P. S. 100 for those with the highest grades and the best conduct, instead of being stuck in the catch-all 8B3. But that was a light-year ago. Standing there, with my head down, I wished to be neither in the "1" nor the "3" but in a null class by myself, and nameless if possible, a nonentity conceived by a sin of omission, X and nowhere. It was all over.

After a conference of the Dean, Mrs. Kohn, and Mr. Stackenfeld—who had already reported the incident in the gym—a note was sent to my mother. She arrived solidly in school with me the next morning, prepared to fight it out as usual. My mother had been to such sessions before, over minor issues of unsigned report cards, ink fights, etc., and had always managed to prove me right. But all the testimony against me this time, capped by the fatal letter of Mrs. Falk, was too much even for her, and she subsided in silence.

The Dean proposed that my mother take me to see a certain professor of child psychology at Hunter College who specialized in "hard" cases. Since that seemed the easiest way out for me, and, besides, would offer a day's surcease from school, I agreed. Accordingly, an appointment was made with the professor, and that same week Mr. Stackenfeld himself drove us to Hunter College in his car. My mother sat beside me in the back seat looking as resigned and mournful as possible. To distract myself on the long ride to Manhattan from Brooklyn, I took along a book which had never failed before, *Through Space to Mars*, but somehow the weight and gravity of the situation held me down. I was even more depressed by the time we arrived.

HUNTER COLLEGE was the largest school I had ever seen, and it swarmed with women. Mr. Stackenfeld guided us through a wide corridor where women smiled and gurgled with pleasure when they saw me, as though they knew who I was, until, around a bend, we found the professor's office. Here Mr. Stackenfeld and my mother both left me, and I sat down waiting for the ordeal.

In a little while, someone called me by name and led me across the hall into a room where the professor held his classes. It was a seminar or laboratory in advanced child psychology, and I was the advanced case. The room was a sort of pit-like, sloping auditorium and at the bottom, behind a desk, was an old man with a tuft of gray beard who smiled and glowed and pointed with a pencil to a high chair for me to sit down. The light reflecting upon his glasses hid his eyes, and was triangulated by a gold disk that hung upon a chain around his waist like a little sun. The scene was weird. On the high chair, "by merit raised to this bad eminence," I looked around and saw that the class was filled with women all beaming at me and taking notes.

The first question the professor asked turned me deeply into myself: "Which do you like better, Milton, your father or your mother?"

As a man playing basketball suddenly receives the center tap, and swerves, looking for an opening to pass or shoot or dribble down the court, while, on all sides, he sees nothing but milling and confusing arms, the shouts of his own teammates wrangling with those of his opponents, some crying here and some crying there, until the ball swells in his hands and the hoop contracts to a little far-off ring, and, at last, the umpire

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blows his whistle to end the play—so I sat baffled and uncertain of what to do. Who could answer a question like that? When he saw that I was confused and holding, the professor quickly changed the subject.

He poked his long finger into my past and put words in my mouth I never knew were there. In the presence of the girls in the class he asked me a highly personal question. I felt reduced and exposed. And all the while, I kept trying to penetrate the glare on his glasses, to see what he was seeing. But it was as though the light came from behind.

When I turned my head away, I succeeded in recovering my poise. After a few stammers, I began to anticipate and then parry his questions, asked him one in return, made a few asides to the audience, even cracked a joke and was beatified when all the smilers burst into a loud laugh. The oppressive atmosphere of the class lifted. Since the professor wanted to hear about the *Gossip*, I outlined its history from the start—my work as editor, its contents, the trouble with Gloria Lockoff, described the policy of the paper, and expanded some of the ideas in my editorial "World Events"—omitting nothing but the letter from Mrs. Falk, which he knew about anyway. By the time the class bell rang, with the same angry finality as at P. S. 100, I was in a high state of self-esteem.

What a fool I was! A minute later, I realized how he had deliberately duped and tempted me to expose myself, exalted me only to make my fall more abject, and I felt, in the pit of my stomach, the vertigo of descending in an elevator very rapidly. As the class emptied, I saw him saying something to my mother at the door; and, from the way his beard jerked in my direction from time to time, I was sure the news was evil. We left together in a lingering mood, with the world all before us. "What's going to become of you, Milton?" she told me. My mother had often said that, even in small things like liver or soft-boiled eggs, I didn't know what good was. And as we sat in the back of the car going home, she repeated again and again that the professor thought I was too wild, spoiled, conceited, and unaware of the difference between right and wrong. That was his opinion.

The professor's solicitude did not end with my ordeal at Hunter College. For weeks afterwards students from his class would drop in to see me at home and chat with my mother, still smiling at us and taking notes. From a special case I had become a project. But, in time, these visitations became less frequent, and even the memory of the *Gossip* faded to a distant blue. I fitted myself into the cramp of school again.

THEN the warm weather of spring and the approaching day of graduation brought a carnival excitement to class 8B3. As though we were all celebrities, everybody was signing everybody else's autograph album. David Goldstein wrote in mine: "In the golden chain of friendship, regard me as a link"; Helen Lavoy: "Roses are red, violets are blue, a face like yours belongs in a zoo"—but she really liked me; Rubin Bayliss: "Take the local, take the express, but don't get off till you reach success"; that jerk, Albert Moscowitz: "Consideration, tolerance, and a fatalist's perspective, and you cannot help but make your work"; and Gloria Lockoff, without rhyme: "I wish you all the success in the world and if you ever become a newspaper editor let me know or rather Mrs. Kohn. She'd love to see what you turned out to be. If anything." This was typical of her.

I had always imagined the end of school as a day of absolute freedom and revelation when I would see the other side of the moon. For years I had longed for it. Yet as the time came closer, I began to feel sentimental about good old P. S. 100. I visited my earliest teachers from the lower grades, carved my initials deeply and finally on my desk, and sang the school anthem in a loud voice at assemblies. One morning in the auditorium, during a dress rehearsal for the great day, while I was marching up and down the aisle in my "graduation suit"—with long trousers instead of knickers—a note came that the Principal wanted to see me.

When I entered his office, the Principal was sitting ensphered behind a wide round desk, in a white office, with an American flag on the wall over his head. What a difference from the gloomy pit where I had been tormented by the professor! I had seen the Principal at assemblies and heard his name whispered in awe ever since I was first enrolled at P. S. 100, but we had never

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exchanged more than a few solemn and stilted words. Now he beckoned me to sit down. He began by asking me the serious question that has bored generation after generation—what did I want to be when I grew up? And I answered, as I always did, that I didn't know for sure. While he talked, my attention wandered over the school plaques and trophies in his office, to the walls smiling with photographs, through the window looking out over the schoolyard—arrested occasionally by the sound of the words "Gossip" and "World Events"—and returned to find him standing enormously above me. At this cue, I too stood up and we shook hands as we had once before on the stage of the auditorium.

"Milton," he said, "Milton, you know you're named after John Milton." No I wasn't. "He was a Puritan and a great poet." And there it was.

A large picture hung in the assembly hall showing a group of Puritans on their way to church on the first Thanksgiving Day. And though I had heard vaguely of John Milton by then, it was difficult to think of a poet as one of those grim characters dressed in black knickers, stiff collars, and what looked like firemen's hats. Nevertheless, I was impressed.

I went to the library that day, and for the first time opened *Paradise Lost*. The "organ voice" thundered at me: *Of man's first disobedience and the fruit Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste Brought death. . . .* —and all the words seemed to be sounding at once. What was he talking about? I read the lines again, and again they gibbered in my mind like words without meaning. Was this poetry? It was nothing like those easy poems printed in the back of the *Eighth-Grade Speller* which we had been forced to memorize and recite in class. But even without understanding why, I couldn't forget that great blind voice with its oceanic range, broad and powerful enough to be heard across three centuries of time.

AH WELL, Urania—"the meaning, not the name, I call"—you know what I'm going to say. Whether we make our choices or our choices are made for us, like our names, it all comes to the same thing in the end. What thing? There is a ring where name and image join. As I was deaf to my own name and its meaning, so at last I was identified with Milton, blind to his own image by a kind of visual amnesia. But I don't have to justify myself before you. Only by accident can we ever find an Eternal Providence in our lives, although, to come down to earth, for our ways to have crossed that way in Brooklyn was a revelation of poetic justice—as if there were any other kind.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE MAN AND HIS SOUL

Unwilling We Are Born, Unwilling Die

ONCE upon a time people—not philosophers of course—used to imagine there was a thing called the soul that enabled one to find meaning in life, and value and direction in the world. The "soul" could do this because it came "from above," where it had shared in the blissful perfection of the spirit; this prenatal experience was assumed to be of decisive importance for all that was to come. Plato, in *Phaedros,* spoke of a "being thrown into birth" that was the result of an intellectual "fall" within the yet unborn soul. Jews assumed a general innocence of the soul before being clothed with flesh.

An early popular tradition that is recorded in the Babylonian Talmud *(Nidda* 16b) tells of Laylah, the Angel of Night and Conception, who brings our semen before the Lord of the Universe. The tiniest particle of existence faces the source of all existence—not as a particle, but already an individual, *individualis,* indivisible: a person. The future fate of this person, the external features of his earthly life, are determined there and then; but enough freedom is granted him to choose either to fear the Lord or reject Him: it is this that makes him a person.

Another version is preserved in the *Midrash Tanhuma.* It pictures the soul, not yet born but already possessing a name, journeying through Paradise and Hell to learn the prehistory of both the blessed and the damned, thus to discover that human action is either good or bad, there being no neutral sphere in life, and that the world is here for man's good. This journey is followed by a guided tour to all the places the particular soul is to inhabit on earth. And although all this is forgotten at birth, the child and the adult retain subconscious memories: I've been here before, I've known this before!

AN ANONYMOUS compiler, in the early Middle Ages, brought together some such tales he found scattered in Talmudic-Midrashic literature and composed a kind of metaphysical embryology. The concepts he presented could never become part of official Jewish doctrine; the legislators of Jewish life were not concerned with fantasies; Jewish philosophers, Aristotelian and otherwise, objected to the childish and primitive elements in such tales. Only musings about the soul strongly influenced by Platonic and Stoic views, and on a higher intellectual level, appear in the authoritative discussions of medieval Judaism. But popular Jewish faith in the Middle Ages valued the deep regard for life these legends manifested, the idea of the sanctity of sexual intercourse, of conception and growth, the knowledge that in spite of its hardships—which are seen very realistically in our treatise—life is ultimately worth living. The soul, unwilling at first to wear flesh, a human body, finally falls in love with life and is sad when it ends.

THE Hebrew original on which the present translation is based has been preserved in some rare manuscripts; the text of one of these was reproduced by a 17th-century Christian Hebraist, Johann Christoph Wagenseil, in Germany, and later included by Adolph Jellinek in his *Bet ha-Midrash,* a collection of short Midrashic texts published in 1853. The translation is by Francis Golffing.

—NAHUM N. GLATZER

IN WHAT manner does the conformation of the child happen? Rabbi Jochanan said: What does it mean when it is written: "Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number?" It means the great, the marvelous things which the Holy One, blessed be He, does for the conformation of the child.

For in the hour when a man approaches

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his wife, the Holy One, blessed be He, calls out to His messenger, the one who is guardian over pregnancy, and says to him: Know that this man tonight shall beget a child; go now and watch over the seed.

The messenger then does as he is bid. He takes the seed, brings it before the Holy One, blessed be He, and speaks to Him thus: Lord of creation, I have done as you told me; but what is to become of this seed? Make what disposition you choose. Then the Holy One, blessed be He, determines at once whether it shall be strong or weak, tall or short, male or female, foolish or wise, rich or poor. But whether it is to be just or unjust He does not determine, for as we say: "Heaven ordains all, save the fear of Heaven."

At once the Holy One, blessed be He, beckons His messenger, him who holds sway over souls, and says to him: Deliver that soul before me. For in this manner have all creatures been formed since the beginning and so shall it be unto the end.

At once the soul comes before the Holy One, blessed be He, and bows down before Him. At this hour the Holy One, blessed be He, speaks to it thus: Enter into that seed. On the instant the soul opens its mouth and declares: Lord of Creation, the world in which I have resided from the day You made me is sufficient unto me; give me leave, if this be Your pleasure, to remain without and not enter into that mortal seed, for I am holy and pure.

And the Holy One, blessed be He, speaks to the soul: The world into which I would have you enter is better than the world in which you find yourself now. It was for this seed that you were meant on the day I made you.

At once the Holy One, blessed be He, bids the soul enter that seed, though against its will. And the messenger returns and bids the soul enter into the womb of the mother. Then he summons thither two messengers to watch over the creature lest it fall. And over its head a light is kindled, as the Scripture has it: "When His candle shone upon my head," and it looks about and beholds the world from beginning to end.

And on the morrow the messenger takes this creature and leads it into the Garden of Eden and shows it the just, those who are dwelling in glory, and says to the creature: Do you know whence this soul came? And the creature makes answer and says: No. Then the messenger speaks to the creature thus: Him whom you behold in such glory and so exalted was formed like you in his mother's womb; and so was this one, and this one; and they all obeyed the laws and ordinances of the Holy One, blessed be He. If you do as they have done, after death—for they too have died—you will be exalted in glory as they are. However, if you do not, your destiny will be to dwell in a place which I shall show you presently.

And in the evening he takes the creature to the place of the damned and shows it the sinners, those whom the minions of Hell confound and strike with fiery rods until they cry: Woe is us!—but no one takes pity on them. And once more the messenger speaks to the creature: My son, do you know who these are that the flames burn? And the creature answers: No. Whereupon the messenger says: Know that these too were formed from mortal seed in the wombs of their mothers, but they failed to obey and bear witness to the Holy One, blessed be He; it is for this that they suffer so. Know, my child, that you are destined to leave your abode and die. Therefore, do not choose the path of the sinner but the path of the just: and thus you shall live eternally. But where do we find proof that this is so? It is written: "Let thine heart retain My words: keep My Commandments, and live."

And he journeys with the creature from morning until night and shows it all the places where it will tread, and the place in which it will dwell, and the place in which it will be buried at last. And after this he shows it the world of the good and the ill.

Toward evening he returns the creature to the womb of its mother. But the Holy One, blessed be He, shuts it up with doors and bars, as it is written: "Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as it had issued out of the womb?" and it is written: "And I have put My words in thy mouth, and I have covered thee in the shadow of Mine hand"; and the Holy One, blessed be He, speaks to it thus: "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther." So the

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child lies in its mother's womb for nine months; for the first three months it dwells in the lower part, for the second three months in the middle part, for the last three months in the upper part. It partakes of all that its mother eats and drinks; its waste, however, it does not pass, for else its mother would die. For this reason it is written: "Which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvelous things without number."

WHEN the time has come for the creature to issue from the womb, that selfsame messenger visits it and says: Come forth, for it is time now to enter the world. But the creature replies: Did I not say once before to Him who spoke to me, Lord of Creation, that the world in which I have dwelt all this time is sufficient unto me? The messenger replies: The world which I would have you enter is more beautiful than that other one; and he adds: Unwilling you were formed in the womb of your mother; unwilling you are born and step forth into the world. The creature cries as it hears these words. And why does it cry? Because it must leave the world it has dwelt in. The moment it issues forth the messenger strikes it under the nose, and extinguishes the light that shone over its head and bids it step forth, unwilling; and the creature forgets all it has ever seen. And as it steps forth it cries. Why? Because at that hour seven worlds are led past it.

The first world resembles that of a king: every one inquires into the child's pleasure; everyone desires to see and to kiss it, for this is the first year of his life.

The second world resembles that of a pig that is always completely surrounded by filth—and so is the child in his second year.

The third world resembles that of a kid gamboling in the pasture: so does the child frolic until his fifth year.

The fourth world resembles that of a horse proudly prancing along the road: so does the child bear himself proudly, flaunting his youth, until he has reached his eighteenth year.

The fifth world resembles that of a donkey on whose shoulders a pack-saddle is laid: in like manner burdens are placed upon him; he is given a wife, he begets sons and daughters, and has to provide for his children and servants.

The sixth world resembles that of a dog that must provide for itself: it snatches its food where it can, snatches from this one and pilfers from that one, and is not ashamed.

The seventh world resembles that of a scarecrow: for now he is utterly changed, even his servants curse him and wish him dead, and his children mock him to his face.

AT LAST the time has come for his death. The messenger of the Lord appears before him and says: Do you recognize me? And he replies: Yes. Then he adds: What brings you to me today? And the messenger says: I have come to take you away from this world.

Then he cries, his voice resounding from one end of the world to the other, but not a creature can hear him. And he says to the messenger: Did you not lead me out of two worlds and set me down in this world in which I dwell now?

And the messenger says to him: Have I not told you long since that "Unwilling you were begotten and born, and so you are destined to die, and at last will stand and give account before the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He?"

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ON THE HORIZON

BEEPAGE: THE LANGUAGE OF POPULARIZATION

The Classics Translated into Modern Baby Talk

SPENCER BROWN

A cold St. Agnes eve it was—so cold that the owl with all its feathers shivered, so cold that the old Beadsman's fingers were numb as he told his rosary and said his prayers. Passing by the sculptured figures of the dead, he felt sorry for them in their icy graves. As he walked through the chapel door, he could hear the sound of music coming from the castle hall. He sadly turned again to his prayers.

THIS is not a retranslation from a translation of "The Eve of St. Agnes" into French; it is a direct translation from English into a language called Beepage, fashioned for busy people in a busy age. Further on in the same narrative (or "plot-story") we find a sample of Basic Beepage:

She came in with her candle, which blew out, and kneeling before her high arched casement window, she began to pray.

Thus three of the most sumptuous stanzas in all poetry, distilled into a dribble. Thus Keats's silver, snarling trumpets, in transcription.

Beepage is not a new language. Through all ages and tongues it is the dead speech of all stagnant compendia. It filled the short-cut books that Shakespeare drew from; its wide ooze covered the medieval miles of Vincent of Beauvais; and had the terrain not been craggily individual, it would have inundated Montaigne, Bacon, and Burton. In our time Beepage lies in recurring pools in *Reader's Digest*; it is the effluvium of the factories of collective authorship.

Beepage is not gobbledygook. Whereas gobbledygook conceals meaning from both writer and reader, Beepage makes plain. Gobbledygook rears ice palaces filled with fantastic sounds; Beepage drones and is level. Hiding difference, making unevenness even, it flows like a canal, narrow and slightly green, a safe way round the perilous cataracts of living water.

Some of the most extensive recent marshes of Beepage can be found in *Masterpieces of World Literature in Digest Form* (Harper, 1,144 pp., $5.95), from which we have drawn the translation of Keats quoted above. Editor Frank N. Magill comments on the literary needs of busy people in our busy age and expects his work to help produce "a more intellectually alert society," from which "we may reasonably expect an acceleration of our cultural development." Clifton Fadiman blows an amused but enthusiastic introductory horn; then Magill's men step on the accelerator, from *Anna Karenina, Anthony Adverse, Antigone,* and *Apostle, The,* all the way to *Yearling, The* and *You Can't Go Home Again.*

Selecting titles for this curious book must have been a difficult job. Fadiman notes some anomalies but finds things generally satisfactory—a .600 batting average on the first twenty-five really well-known books of fiction that popped into his head. Between horn-beeps he admits that "the aim is not to elevate taste ... but simply to furnish ...

SPENCER BROWN is a member of the English department at the Fieldston School in New York City. Mr. Brown contributed "A Code of Honor for a Mutinous Era" to our June 1952 issue. He was born in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1909 and took his degree at Harvard.

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a useful reference tool." Living authors are allowed to substitute among their works: Evelyn Waugh, so says Magill's introduction, chose *Brideshead Revisited* in place of *Vile Bodies;* and some nameless soul, devout but humorless, chose *Edmund Campion* when he should have chosen *Decline and Fall* or *Scoop*. It is fortunate, or interesting, that this privilege is denied the dead: Milton bows to the judgment of others, and Paradise is lost in digest form but not regained. Homer bats 1.000 (two for two); though Shakespeare hits several out of the park, he sometimes fans—we have *King's Row, King Solomon's Mines,* but no *King Lear*.

Any surprise, however, at the selection of titles—which after all is probably a faithful reflection of the ideals of well-read moviegoers—should vanish in contemplation of eleven hundred pages of great flat plot-stories. Though occasionally a glaring error of fact enlivens their progress, in the main they are remorselessly correct except in interpretation and overtones. Let us hear Beepage at its best:

> Roberta began to be suspicious and eventually found out the truth. By that time she was pregnant. Clyde went to drug stores for medicine that did not work. He attempted to find a doctor of questionable reputation. Roberta went to see one physician who refused to perform an operation.

No matter how much we may admire this unconscious criticism of Dreiser's prose, we must be more impressed by the limp relatives which are basic to the grammar of the language which is Beepage. Clyde has more moral fiber than we gave him credit for, but we wonder how many doctors Roberta consulted who did not refuse.

> When the third day of the chase began, Moby Dick seemed tired, and the *Pequod*'s boats soon overtook him. Bound to the whale's back by the coils of rope from the harpoon poles they saw the body of Fedallah. The first part of his prophecy had been fulfilled. Moby Dick, enraged by his pain, turned on the boats and splintered them. On the *Pequod* Starbuck watched and turned the ship in the hope of saving the captain and some of the crew. The canoe-coffin which Queequeg had built appeared now floating on the waters—the coffin of American wood. As the mate maneuvered the ship toward the battle, the monster suddenly turned on the *Pequod,* and Starbuck felt the wood cracking under him as the ship floundered and slowly sank. Ahab and all the men except Ishmael perished in the sea. Ishmael managed to swim to the canoe-coffin. He remained clinging to it for almost twenty-four hours until he was picked up by a passing ship.

Surely this is Michelangelo's *Moses* copied in a small bar of Ivory soap. It is an open question whether this account is finer than that of *Classic Comics,* where Ahab utters the classically comic "a-a-a-arh!" as the rope snares his neck. Melville's limited imagination wanted silence, which Beepage gives him; he also wanted the rope, furnished by the comic. The hearse of American wood might have been Queequeg's coffin if Melville had not obstinately said it was the *Pequod*. The devious-cruising *Rachel* finds another orphan, this time Melville.

THE style is the whole man, and Beepage is the whole nonentity. Beepage even fabricates fig leaves to hide its nakedness: Romeo and Juliet, though duly married, are apparently allowed to meet only in an orchard, which must be rather damp at night. Trivial as the mistake is, it is symptomatic, recurring in digest after master-digest, but nowhere so triumphantly as in *Sanctuary*. The horns of Fadiman, faintly puffing, recommend *Masterpieces,* "if you'd like to check on whether William Faulkner's plots make any sense at all, denuded of the costumery of his syntax." Well, *Sanctuary* is not exactly limpid, but *Sanctuary* in Beepage will baffle anyone not in the employ of J. B. Rhine:

> Seeing Goodwin coming toward the house, she [Temple] ran to the barn and hid in the corncrib. Watching, Popeye saw Goodwin looking from the house toward the barn. In the barn Popeye found Tommy at the door of the corncrib. While Tommy stood watching Goodwin, Popeye shot him. A short while later Goodwin told Ruby that Tommy had been shot.

Eight paragraphs later, we learn that Temple had been "attacked," but when, how, and by whom we must guess. No, Faulkner makes no sense at all, denuded of the costumery of his syntax and wrapped in so decent and so opaque a veil.

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The Reverend Dr. Bowdler, who confessed himself fairly licked by *Othello* and had to print the offensive thing substantially entire, could have learned much from well-digested Faulkner. In fact, despite the utter depravity of world literature, one would have to concede that almost nothing in *Masterpieces* would defile the hypothetically pure ear of the high-school girl—quite properly, because she is the reader at whom the book is aimed.

Beepage is translation-English, and *Masterpieces*, for all its scholarly pretensions and Fadiman's batting averages, is nothing but a pony. Schools were once frustrated—perhaps deservedly—by students who trotted through courses in dead languages. Now we have trots from English, a living language that is hard to read, into Beepage, a dead language that anybody can read without effort or emotion. It is too bad that students will pass a test on *The Red and the Black* or learn the plot of *Treasure Island* and miss the vicarious experience the guileless novelist hoped to induce. But it can't be helped; we are in for acceleration in our cultural development.

All this may well be thought of as flogging a dead horse, which is futile and nasty. And flogging a live pony is wicked. But if the pony brays, may we not reasonably ask it to be silent so that we can hear what people are saying?

LET us move on to higher ground, hoping to dry our feet. One obvious omission from *Masterpieces in Beepage* is a collection of masterpieces and other things called the Bible. This is hardly serious, since the Bible is translated into Beepage, among other languages, every few years. As the original is a constant best-seller, so are the translations, the chief current examples being the works of the late Fulton Oursler, *The Greatest Book Ever Written* and *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (Doubleday).

GBEW, published last year, is still high on the lists, and *GSET*, three years old, has run through sixteen printings: they are not negligible influences on the reading public, nor are they short cuts to a high-school diploma. They are sincerely if not profoundly religious; they intend to draw all men to their great originals—*GBEW* to "the Old Testament story" and *GSET* to the life of Jesus. But they are Beepage.

Oursler's Beepage, however, unlike what we have been traversing, is high class. He is a professional slick writer, has done much research, and has an eye for colorful detail. His writing moves briskly; for instance, we can see through his words the town of Capernaum:

> A great sight on the day they arrived, this lake port, seething with energy, overrun with men and women of all nations. Mother and son looked around them, startled and interested and a little sad at all the scurry of the place. It was a town rich, busy, and corrupt, one of the chief stations on the great route from Damascus to the Mediterranean ports of Egypt; a market where silver hordes of fish were carted through the streets, where wine from climbing grape arbors stained the bare feet of the farm girls and there were so many olive groves that a man could take a bath in oil. Through its high streets the caravans moved north and south, and one could buy and sell wheat and silk and ivory; well-paid artisans walked through the bazaars with hands stained blue from the indigo dyes made in next-door Magdala.

This is inoffensive enough, cut to the standard last of the well-heeled historical novel, and it even includes a gentle allusive shock in the word "Magdala." It is in such footnotes to the narrative that Oursler renders his best service to readers who think they cannot cope imaginatively with the Bible—and this presumably is the service for which he was so highly paid. But in the narrative itself, though there is always motion, the majesty has vanished:

> That was more than a nuisance in the high priest's comfortable scheme of things—it was potential ruin. The Nazarene *must* be stopped. [Some halfback! Some line!]
>
> Did any man ever feel more inferior than Zacchaeus? He was so small, his body so badly made, that he was almost a midget; he was a tax man, and no one would have anything to do with him. Only in this stranger from Nazareth did he see any promise of human warmth and understanding—and now that Jesus was about to pass right in front of him and his custom-house, he feared he would not get even a glimpse of his hero, because the crowd was so large and Zacchaeus was so small. That was why the hunchback scrambled up into the branches of the sycamore tree—a medium-sized, bushy green tree that swayed crazily under his monkey-like movements of arms and legs; and

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through the damp, flat leaves he thrust a bearded face to look down the squalid street for the man he had heard would be a friend to anyone.

Jesus looked up and saw him there, in his brocaded silken cap, imported from Ctesiphon. Zacchaeus turned pale but the Master waved His hand and called: "Zacchaeus! Hurry up and come down! . . . *Come down,* for this day I must abide in your house!"

The Master in *my* house! Jesus *my* guest!

Some would prefer the old primer version:

Zacchaeus he
Climbed a tree
The Lord for to see.

Again:

"That man shall surely die," declared David indignantly. "And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing and because he had no pity."

"You are the man," cried Nathan in a terrible voice. He made unmistakably clear the parable he had spoken: "You have despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight."

And step by step Nathan sternly rehearsed the heinous offenses against Uriah, seduction and then murder.

Oursler never uses a big big *thou* unless the weight of tradition is simply too much for him to bear, as in Ruth's words to Naomi or The Song of Solomon. "You are the man," instead of the thundering "Thou art the man" that has reverberated down the ages, is trivial but significant. English, living for centuries, can preserve an obsolete form in the amber of a phrase or a literary tradition; Beepage, since it will die this summer, must keep its insect hum nervously up to date.

Oursler accepts and adds fussy details to Biblical miracles, yet his voluminous prosiness manages to avoid the awe of the believer, the wonder of the poet, or the reason of the skeptic. He is rigid in morals yet cannot resist a titillating vignette of Sodom and a slow, sweaty strip-tease with Salome; even Boaz is "a jolly man of middle age with no eye to miss such beauty as this ragged stranger." Oursler takes infinite pains to record and invent human touches in Jesus, yet he dares not say of Lazarus, "Lord, by this time he stinketh." He strains for grandiloquence and destroys power and dignity. He falls among all conceivable stools.

"Rhythmless speech or writing is like the flow of liquid from a pipe or tap; it runs with smooth monotony from when it is turned on to when it is turned off, provided it is clear stuff; if it is turbid, the smooth flow is queerly and abruptly checked from time to time, and then resumed. Rhythmic speech or writing is like the waves of the sea, moving onward with alternating rise and fall, connected yet separate, like but different, suggestive of some law, too complex for analysis or statement, controlling the relations between wave and wave, waves and sea, phrase and phrase, phrases and speech. In other words, live speech, said or written, is rhythmic, and rhythmless speech is at the best dead." This sentence, pronounced long ago by H. W. Fowler in his *Dictionary of Modern English Usage,* is prophetically just for the hack murderers of literature; ironically just also, since the passage Fowler quotes as a masterpiece of rhythm is one of many that expire in Oursler's interminable translation.

Here is the chatty translation into Beepage:

But to David, Absalom still remained, in his ignominious death, the darling of his heart and soul. The king-father's grief in the midst of military triumph was overwhelming. All in an instant he seemed to forget the treachery, the stark fact that his favorite would have killed his father if he could, would have taken his throne, worn his crown, and reigned by his father's murder. All bitterness drained out of David's heart. Weeping, he stood at the window of his private room and raised a broken voice to God:

"O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

The sublime English version that Beepage drowns out for us:

And the king was much moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept: and as he went, thus he said, O my son, Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!

By the implacable judgment of Fowler and of our own ears, and in spite of the frivolous defense by Fadiman, Magill and Oursler stand condemned—imperishable twin marsh-wideners and canal-puddlers, the Dioscuri of the damp wastes of Beepage.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

THE STORK SURPRISES THE DEMOGRAPHERS

Where the Experts Erred—and Why

DENNIS H. WRONG

THE public opinion pollers are not the only professional group of social scientists who have in recent years been exposed as false prophets. Although their mishaps have been less publicized than those of Mr. Gallup and his confreres, our population experts have seen their careful forecasts of the decline of American population dramatically upset by a sudden rise in the birth rate following years of declining fertility. To the consternation of the experts, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand, and even the war-ravaged nations of Europe, have shown the same sharp upward trend, and the self-criticism evoked in the ranks of demographers has been even sharper than that of the opinion pollsters after the 1948 fiasco. At the present time, most American demographers are engaged in re-examining and reformulating their long-standing assumptions about the broad course of population growth, as well as the technical methods used by them in past predictions. As the April 1949 issue of *Population Index* sadly noted: "Until recently the course of population development in Western nations was generally believed to be well charted and understood. This is now a matter of some doubt."

What happened to refute the demographers' confident predictions? The preliminary reports of the 1950 census show that during the 1940's the population of the United States increased from 131,700,000 to 150,700,000, the largest increase between censuses in the history of the nation, and over twice the increase in the previous decade; the percentage rate of increase in the decade was 14.5 as against 7.2 in the 1930's; the number of children under ten increased by 44 per cent; and the birth rate rose to the highest level since 1915. A brief review of the history of population growth in the Western world will indicate more fully the significance of these reversals of trend.

THE standard theory about population growth in the context of which predictions have been made is best presented in the work of Warren Thompson and Frank W. Notestein, two of the country's leading demographers. Their useful conception of a "demographic cycle" (see Notestein's essay "Population—The Long View," in *Food for the World*, edited by Theodore Schultz, 1944, and Thompson's *Plenty of People*, 1944) describes—and predicts—the curve of population growth that is followed by nations making the transition

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AMERICA had led the world in the growth of its population so long that it was saddening to discover, in the 1920's and 1930's, that our population was advancing at the more measured rate typical of the countries of Western Europe. On the basis of that trend demographers predicted a continuing decline, bad news indeed since it presaged a contracting domestic market and a nation that would have a hard time filling its armies. Suddenly in the last ten years, the birth rate has bounded up again, confounding the prophets. DENNIS H. WRONG here discusses why the population experts went off the track. Mr. Wrong has taught sociology at New York University, Princeton, and Rutgers, and was until recently on the staff of George Kennan (now Ambassador to Russia) at the Institute for Advanced Study, doing research on problems of population and natural resources.

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from an agricultural-handicraft economy to urbanism and industrialism. Pre-industrial societies, according to this scheme, are in the phase of "high growth potential"—that is, their birth rates are high, but are balanced by equally high death rates, so their populations tend to remain fairly stable. Very low life expectancy causes a concentration of the population in the younger age groups. In India, for example, a nation which is still in this phase of the demographic cycle, the ratio of children under five to adults over sixty-five is 7 to 1, while in the United States it is almost 1 to 1. These are the true "Malthusian" populations, in which growth or its absence is determined primarily by the limits of the available food supply. Europe was in this phase of "high growth potential" before 1650, and the Near East, India, China, Southeast Asia, non-white Africa, and most Latin American nations are still at this stage today.

The demographic stability of these technologically backward societies is abruptly disturbed when political pacification, greater agricultural productivity, better means of transportation, more adequate diets, public health and sanitation measures, modern medical care, and other benefits of modernization lower the death rate. Since the high birth rate is not at first affected, or only very slightly, a period of "transitional growth," in which the population increases rapidly, ensues. The death rate falls at a much faster rate than the birth rate, and the population grows rapidly for several generations. Between 1790 and 1860, when the United States was in this phase of the population cycle, its population doubled on an average of once every 23.5 years—a source of wondering admiration to De Tocqueville and of gloomy foreboding to Malthus. Today the Soviet Union, Southeastern Europe, Japan, Argentina, and Brazil are in the phase of "transitional growth," and their populations will very probably begin to level off in the next half-century.

On the heels of this first demographic revolution—the reduction of mortality and the huge population growth it releases—there has followed a second: a huge decline in the fertility of mature industrial civilizations. Students of population at one time had a tendency to attribute the lowered birth rate of the industrialized West to the supposedly debilitating effects of the "fast tempo of modern life" on the "reproductive energies of the race"—Herbert Spencer was the most prominent figure to favor this view. Such biological explanations, however, are no longer given much credence, for it has become increasingly obvious that the declining birth rate is the result of a deliberate decision on the part of parents to restrict the size of their families.

The important question then became, why do people in modern society tend to want smaller families?

The invention and diffusion of effective contraceptive devices make the limitation of family size possible, but it is the replacement of an agricultural subsistence economy by a market economy in which the welfare of the family depends on an earned cash income that seems to motivate the trend to fewer children. For the expense of bearing and rearing children now competes with other demands on the family budget. And with the decline of the family farm, the legal banning of child labor, and the passage of compulsory school attendance legislation, children are no longer an economic asset. Also, urban living has made it more difficult to accommodate large families in cramped living quarters.

However, if these were the only causes of the decline in the birth rate, one would expect low-income families to be the first to practice birth control: yet it is the wealthier families who have everywhere pioneered in "planned parenthood." This is even true of the cities of the ancient world where the upper classes practiced infanticide (especially female) to rid themselves of unwanted offspring. Evidently more than mere economic hardship is involved: there is the desire to maintain a standard of living well above the subsistence level; the inclination to regard as necessities one-time luxury goods and services, such as plumbing or automobiles; the requirements of Veblen's "canons of conspicuous consumption"; the pursuit of interests and ambitions centered outside the family group; the wish to cultivate the social and sexual pleasures of married life for their own sake; the desire of women to free themselves from the drudgery of bearing and rearing children. But there are undoubtedly more subtle alterations of motive and attitude which underlie the momentous shift from a birth rate determined by the vagaries of nature to one which is consciously planned and controlled by human purpose. The fundamental emotions of human

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beings towards sex, marriage, and parenthood are implicated. No doubt, the insufficient attention paid by most demographers to such deeper psychological factors contributed to the failure of contemporary forecasts.

With declining fertility another radical change takes place: the middle and older age groups become proportionately larger as the fewer infants born each year are insufficiently numerous to replace their parents. The most summary comparison of backward and long-industrialized areas tells the story: in the Near East 40 per cent of the population are under fifteen ("children"), and 54 per cent are between fifteen and fifty-nine ("adults"), as compared to the corresponding percentages in each group for Northwestern and Central Europe of 24 and 62. But whereas in the Near East "old people" (over sixty) number 6 per cent, this group amounts to 14 per cent in these European countries.

Aging populations can continue to grow for a time, but only because the high percentage of adults provide a large stock of potential parents whose children will make up in over-all number for the decline in the size of each individual family. However, as the last survivors of the age of large families approach the limits of life expectancy, the death rate will rise to a level equal to or surpassing the birth rate, unless the trend is reversed by a return to larger families. Thus the cycle will be completed: from a stationary population with a high birth rate and a high death rate, to a stationary population with a low birth rate and a low death rate.

Eventual stability or actual decline appears, therefore, to be inherent in the unstable age structure of advanced industrial societies, which is why Notestein characterizes them as populations in the phase of "incipient decline." It was this phase, all competent demographers agreed, that the United States had reached in the 1930's; the total population might rise for a few more decades, but the rapidly increasing proportion of the old would ensure an absolute fall beginning in the not too distant future.

IT WAS against the background of rapidly falling birth rates and restricted immigration that Warren Thompson and P. K. Whelpton of the Scripps Foundation in 1933 presented estimates of the future population of the United States to President Hoover's Research Committee on Social Trends. This was the first time that the forecasts of demographers had been given an official, state-sanctioned status. From that time on, estimates of future populations, or projections as they are technically called, were to serve as the essential foundation for the long-range planning that, in the same year, became an important feature of American life.

Most of these estimates were worked out by Thompson and Whelpton. The method they employ is the most widely accepted of several which have been devised by demographers. It is based on concrete assumptions about the actual factors determining population growth—births, deaths, and migration—rather than on mathematical formulae or extrapolated curves, which had been favored by population students ever since Malthus advanced his theory of the geometric progression of population. Thompson and Whelpton start by analyzing the birth rates and death rates of each age group in the population. They then project these rates a specified number of years ahead and, after making allowances for probable future migration, they can calculate what the future size and age composition of the population will be, if birth and death rates do not change. Since birth and death rates have in fact been constantly changing in all regions except those which are untouched by industrialization, it is necessary to make additional assumptions about the rate and direction of future changes. There are always several alternative possibilities, so Thompson and Whelpton habitually make various estimates of the future population, each one based on a different combination of assumptions about future levels of fertility, mortality, and migration. Under the influence of the prevailing demographic viewpoint, which saw America entering the stage of "incipient decline," they have in the past regarded those projections which assumed that there would be "medium" fertility, "low" mortality, and no annual net immigration as the most likely to be realized, and it is these which the Census Bureau has invariably selected for its official forecasts.

Up until 1940, nothing happened to seriously challenge these forecasts. The 1940 census contained no surprises. But all of a sudden reality began to break through the curves that had been fitted to it. Every year projections were revised upward; but even so, they never caught up with the actual figure of

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the 1950 census. As a vigorous critic of population forecasting, Joseph S. Davis, wrote in 1949 (*The Population Upsurge in the United States,* Food Research Institute, Stanford University): "Nearly all the favored projections from 1938 through early 1949, so far as users can interpret them, will be below the actuality in 1950 by something like one million for every year between the date of publication and the target date!"

IT IS quite clear in retrospect where the forecasts went wrong. In the depression decade the rate of increase of the American population was the lowest ever recorded, and the absolute increase of under eight million was the lowest since the Civil War. It seemed clear that the United States was now well into the phase of "incipient decline," and that absolute decline was imminent. The population forecasts made in the middle and late 30's anticipated continued slowing up of growth in the 40's and 50's and a peak in numbers by 1980. Demographers both shared and contributed to the pessimistic outlook of the period, and wrote somber essays on the social consequences of an aging and declining population which sounded most disheartening to a nation accustomed to stressing its youthfulness. In view of the current alarm about the pressure of populations on the food supply (see Morton Clurman, "Will Births Outstrip Mankind's Resources?" COMMENTARY, March 1952), it may sound odd to characterize forecasts of declining population growth as pessimistic, but it should be remembered that the depression caused widespread fears that the American economy had reached the limits of its expansion, and one school of economists, the "secular stagnationists," regarded the decline of population growth as a major factor restricting investment opportunities.

But as the nation recovered from the depression, the birth rate began to climb and in the early years of the war it shot up until in 1943 it was higher than in any year since 1926. Demographers still persisted in believing that the long-run trend was downward, and they found very plausible explanations for the presumed short-run disparity. Economic hardship, they maintained, had caused many people to postpone getting married and having children during the depression, and this "backlog" was carried over and released in the late 30's and early 40's. But once the unborn babies of the depression period had finally been born in the early 40's, fertility would resume its decline because analysis revealed that the rise in the birth rate did not reflect an increase in the average size of the family. The "war babies" were nearly all first or second children. Couples who already had several children were not induced by prosperity to have more. The birth rate rose only because previously childless women had their first children, and more women married, married younger, and gave birth to their first child earlier, than had been the case in the 1930's or even in the 1920's.

IN 1944 and 1945 the birth rate fell a little and demographers were convinced that the long-range trend was reestablishing itself. But then, as soon as the war was over, the birth rate soared again, and in 1947 nearly four million babies were born, the largest number ever born in a single year in the history of the nation. However, there was still no visible evidence of a trend towards larger families. Demographers patiently explained that this time it was births that would "normally" have occurred in the 1950's which had been "borrowed" by the late 1940's as a result of the exceptional prosperity of the postwar years. It was still a high marriage rate and earlier ventures into both matrimony and parenthood which accounted for the increase in births. Demographers reasoned that there was a natural limit to this matter of marrying at progressively earlier ages; and while women might continue to bear their two or three children earlier in life than their mothers had, their contribution to the birth rate would be ended once these children had been born. Without an increase in the number of children per family, of which there was no sign, the birth rate would eventually have to fall to a lower level. A decisive decline was predicted for the early 1950's.

Then more babies were born in 1951 than in 1947, the previous record year, and the flood of births showed no sign of abating in the first half of 1952. Most significant of all, there are some indications that a trend towards slightly larger families has finally emerged in the past two years. No longer can demographers speak of births "borrowed" from the future, for with marriages falling off sharply in 1951 and early 1952, the addition of new children to two- and three-child families has helped keep the birth rate at a high level.

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If this trend towards slightly larger families continues and spreads, it is altogether possible that the American population will go on growing for the next half century or longer, and the all-time peak in numbers which demographers have for so long been claiming to be just around the corner will be postponed until the remote future.

Nevertheless, slightly larger families—an average of three or four children per family instead of two, for instance—would not mean that there has been any departure from voluntary parenthood. A reversal of the historic transition from unrestricted fertility to birth control is most unlikely in the modern world, so the significance of a slight increase in family size should not be exaggerated. There has been no third demographic revolution—at least not yet.

At present one can only speculate about the causes of the new upturn—for even the basic statistical data are not yet available. There have been signs of a revival of positive attitudes toward the family in the urban middle class; perhaps the growing popularity of psychiatry, and the derogation of the values of work and success in favor of those associated with leisure and security, which has been noted by social psychologists like David Riesman, has created a new preference for larger families. Possibly the pervasive anxiety of the age has produced a compulsive retreat to the "fundamentals" of parenthood and domesticity. However, it is doubtful that these motivations could withstand the impact of another economic depression or of too steep an inflationary spiral; people may wish to have more children because of psychological insecurity, but they will certainly restrain their desires for a larger brood if economic insecurity threatens them as well.

AT A time when military planners anxiously scan census tables and population projections to discover how many young men will be available for military service in five, fifteen, and twenty-five years, and when economists, already shaken by their own postwar failures in prediction, scan the same figures to discern the size of future markets and labor forces, it becomes a matter of more than academic interest to determine just why it was that the census projections were so far off.

The historical events which seem to have affected the birth rate and confounded the demographers were, in their order of occurrence: The severity of the depression, the pre-Pearl Harbor defense boom, World War II, postwar prosperity and its continuation as a result of the European aid program, and the partial mobilization required by the cold war with the Soviet Union. Now no one could justifiably expect even a Nostradamus to predict successfully all of these things, let alone their precise impact on fertility. Demographers, indeed, have repeatedly stated that their forecasts are not intended to be *predictions* of the future population at all, but are simply *projections* of what it will be *if and only if* (as logicians like to say) certain trends continue to operate. But Harold Dorn, in a brilliant article in the *Journal of the American Statistical Association* ("Pitfalls in Population Forecasts and Projections," Volume 45), charges the demographers with false modesty for disclaiming in this manner the predictive intent of their projections, pointing out that government agencies and businessmen have based their planning on the Census Bureau forecasts without ever having been cautioned by the demographers about their limitations.

In retrospect, we must say the demographers are chiefly guilty of having become too entranced with their tables and statistical manipulations, and of underestimating the novelty, disorder, and above all, the weight of conscious choice and other subjective factors, in human life. The knowledge that until the late 30's the birth rate had been steadily declining, and that planned families are everywhere smaller than unplanned ones, impressed them to such an extent that they failed to realize that there was no inherent reason why under improving economic conditions more people might not decide to have children—and young couples might not decide to have slightly larger families than their parents had. Voluntary control of births, after all, implies precisely a greater freedom of decision, and this includes the freedom to reverse previous trends. The demographers stressed instead the age composition of the population, which had been distorted by the long decline in births, and they became convinced that the continued slowing up of population growth and eventual depopulation was "inherent" in the age structure. They ignored the possibility of a sharp rise in fertility because they did not consider such a rise to be in any way possible. In light of the almost cosmic uncertainty of life in the 20th century, it is easy to sympathize with their plight.

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THEY have learned their lesson. In 1930 O. E. Baker wrote that "the population of the United States, ten, twenty, even fifty years hence, can be predicted with a greater degree of accuracy than any other economic or social fact, provided the immigration laws are not changed." In 1952, Irene Taeuber wrote in a symposium on population and resources problems (*World Population and Future Resources*, edited by Paul K. Hatt, American Book Company, 1952): "The answer to 'What will happen?' or even to 'What is probable?' is not to be found in the formal manipulation of population statistics. Birth and death rates are variable, their levels and their trends at once products and causes of those physical, economic, social, political, and psychological factors that in interaction determine status and development. The problem of the future of population growth is the problem of the future of the culture."

The most recent official population forecasts (Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Population Estimates, Series P-25, No. 43, August 10, 1950) reveal even more strikingly the changed outlook of American demographers. They differ from earlier forecasts in four major respects:

(1) The population is projected only eleven years ahead, to 1960, whereas in previous forecasts it was projected fifty years into the future and sometimes even further.

(2) The estimates for 1960 vary from 161 to 180 million—a range of close to 20 million! In all of the earlier forecasts the range between the highest and lowest figures for a ten-year projection was less than 5 million. The forecasters, Jacob Siegel and Helen White of the Census Bureau, write: "Although the range indicated by the population projections may appear rather wide, such a range is now recognized as desirable by many leading demographers; and it is believed a narrower range would give a misleading impression of the predictability of the future population from present knowledge."

(3) Instead of selecting a "preferred" series from the three presented, as had previously been the custom, Siegel and White expressly warn users of the projections not to regard the "medium" series as the closest to an actual prediction of the future population, and no series is assumed to be more probable than any other.

(4) Acutely aware of the recently demonstrated difficulties in forecasting future fertility, Siegel and White indicate which of the projected age-sex groups in the population depend on assumptions about the future birth rate and which depend only on the survival of age-sex groups which were already born in 1949 with deductions made for probable deaths. All of the projections of the total future population must, of course, rest on hazardous estimates of future births.

BERTRAND RUSSELL has recently suggested that the habit of planned parenthood, rather than free enterprise or parliamentary government, is perhaps the most valuable contribution which the culture of the West can make to the rest of the world. It introduces, however, a startling element of unpredictability into our society, of massive impact in many areas. It is surely an amazing thing that the wealthiest and most powerful nation in the world cannot predict for even ten years ahead what the size of its own population will be within a margin for error of less than twenty million. In effect, population growth is no longer an independent variable determined by the age composition of the population and stable trends in fertility and mortality; it has become instead closely dependent on economic conditions, world affairs, and cultural factors, waxing and waning as the birth rate responds positively and negatively to successive booms, depressions, and wars.

Let us glance at the new problems created by these fluctuations in the annual number of births. At the present time, for instance, we are feeling the effects of a dearth of teen-agers because it is the depression-born generation which is now coming of age. The number of new workers entering the labor force and of youths reaching military age is considerably lower than in 1940, when the babies born in the prosperous 20's were approaching adulthood. The result is that our industrial and military manpower situation is far tighter (nor do we have a "cushion" of eight million unemployed to fall back on). The Pentagon is responding to this by adopting less rigid standards of physical fitness for the armed forces. All-out mobilization would today require the imposition of stricter manpower controls at an earlier stage in the war effort than was necessary last time, and greater reliance would have to be placed on older people as labor reserves. Our manpower outlook, however, is only tem-

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porarily unfavorable; when the infants of the 40's come of age in the 60's we will have large annual quotas of teen-agers entering the labor force and reaching draft age. Doubtless the Russians are well aware of this.

A zigzag curve of population growth also poses a huge problem for our school system. The elementary schools are at present crowded with the children born in the war and postwar years; there is a serious shortage of qualified teachers, and many new school buildings have had to be built. On the other hand, the low birth rate of the 30's has reduced the number of high school and college enrollments. This will of course change when the children now in elementary school are ready to enter high school and then college, but it is not much consolation to the young college instructor who is laid off today to know that he has only to wait another five years or so for his services to be in demand again. And if the birth rate should fall, we may find ourselves oversupplied with elementary school facilities. The uncertainty of all predictions of future births makes it exceedingly difficult for boards of education to engage in long-range planning.

Parenthetically, there is no more basic element involved in planning physical facilities of all kinds—not only schools, but hospitals, health centers, transit facilities, streets and sewers, and so on—than the size of population, and if we cannot predict this within any reasonable range for even ten years ahead, what happens to the possibility of planning? Certainly we cannot do without foresight in arranging our affairs. But people, it seems, are less predictable than we thought, and foresight will not get us as far as we fondly thought it would.

Warren Thompson writes in *Population Problems* (Third Edition, McGraw-Hill, 1942), the most widely used text in college courses on population, that "the birth rate of a country is greatly depressed during a war." He cites as evidence the fact that there was a clear-cut decline in the rate of population increase in every war decade in American history (with the exception of the decade in which the small-scale Spanish-American War was fought), and that the birth rate in European countries fell to a new low during World War I. However, in World War II even those European nations that suffered most severely from the war experienced higher birth rates during the war and afterwards. It is evident that Thompson's generalizations no longer hold.

The difference is that modern war is total war, requiring the complete mobilization of a nation's human and physical resources and thus guaranteeing for the duration a measure of economic security. World War II, of course, followed a period of prolonged depression; perhaps a third war preceded instead by the rising living standards of a rearmament boom might not have the same effect on fertility. Some demographers have claimed that World War II brought a rise in the birth rate only because it followed the "abnormal" conditions of the depression, but in a world like ours it is difficult, to say the least, to decide what "normal" conditions are. Each generation tends to face a historically unique situation which may influence marriage and birth rates in quite unforeseeable ways. What effect will the maintenance of a partially mobilized war economy and a large standing army, both unique facts in American history, have on population growth? No one quite knows.

The contemporary upswing in the birth rate has alarmed neo-Malthusians like William Vogt and Fairfield Osborn, who are concerned about the adequacy of American food resources to satisfy the requirements of a still growing population. But they seem to me to have missed the fundamental point about the recent upsurge: its voluntary character, and its association with a high level of prosperity. For if people respond to even slight business recessions (as was the case in 1949) by restricting births, how much more will they respond if standards of living are threatened by an unfavorable population-food ratio.

This great variability in our birth rate does create problems for us: but they are, as we have indicated, such problems as deciding what kinds of facilities we need for babies, children, and young people, when these groups may, in a relatively short time, increase to twice their numbers—or drop to half. Our population growth no longer confronts us with the Malthusian problem of the blind pressure of people on resources: we rather have the quite unique problem of planning for a variable population that is the product of many individual acts of choice, in response to each specific historical situation.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

"My Child: Jew or Christian?"

To the Editor of Commentary:

I have read with great interest Eleanor K. Felder's article "My Child: Jew or Christian?" in your September issue. As in Mrs. Felder's case, my husband is a Jew; and, until my conversion to Judaism (eight years after our marriage) I was a Methodist.

I met my husband during World War II when he came from New Jersey to be stationed as a soldier at the air base in our Midwestern town. When the war was over, it was to my home town that we returned to build our own home. We settled into the entirely Gentile environment in which I had grown up. Although I, like Mrs. Felder, had ceased to be an active church-goer, our chlidren were baptized, and as soon as they were old enough, were started in a Methodist Sunday school. My husband, far away from his own childhood home and from the family and friends that had bound him to Jewish tradition, agreed on that solution. The problem, you might say, was satisfactorily solved.

But in my heart I knew it was not solved. As our oldest little boy reached school age I knew that we could give him whatever identity we wished, but we could not protect him against the possibility that he would hear some child fling out at him, "You dirty Jew!"

How lacking in pride and personal dignity if our son could only shout back, "I'm not a Jew, I'm not a Jew!"

As the Gentile mother of a "half-Jewish" child I faced the fact that if I could not protect my child from this moment, at least I could fortify him against its devastating spiritual effect by building into his spiritual fiber a deep and abiding pride in and admiration for the heritage that came to him through his father, whether he should ever wish to claim this heritage or not.

So it was that I began to go with my husband to the synagogue. He had never attended services since we were married, but we began to go to the temple together on Friday nights, while our children went to Methodist Sunday school on Sunday mornings. During this period I even continued to teach a Sunday school class in my small daughter's "pre-primary" department.

As I began, at home, to teach my children the first things I learned about Judaism, I presented these things as "something very precious that belongs to Daddy." Gradually I came to the point where I wanted to say to them, "This is something very precious that belongs to you." That's when I took them out of the Methodist Sunday school and began sending them to Sunday school at the temple. And finally I came to the time when I longed with all my heart to say, "This is something very precious that belongs to me." That's when I made the first of my three visits to the rabbi before he felt that I had proved the earnestness of my wish to be converted to Judaism.

I have read Mrs. Felder's article several times. She poses her dilemma as a religious question, "My Child: Jew or Christian?" But what she really seems to be asking all the way is "My Child: Jew or Gentile?" The actual *religious* theme she leaves painfully in need of further thought. . . .

There is, to my mind, one compelling reason for raising the child in the tradition of Judaism. This reason can be found in the attitudes of the two religions toward each other.

Judaism has given to the other great religions the precepts of the oneness of God, and the brotherhood of man, and upon this alone does it insist. Judaism does not demand of its adherents, as does Christianity, that they say to others: "You must believe as I believe, or you are lost." It does not, therefore, place upon a child the terrifying necessity of considering his Christian parent doomed, as he would, as a Christian, be compelled to consider his Jewish parent doomed.

The same principle holds true for the conflict within the child's own spirit. Whatever identity his parents choose for him, the child of a mixed marriage still contains within himself the seeds of a double heritage which he himself must one day reconcile. Here again I chose in favor of Judaism. Christianity totally negates all other religions, but the broader frame of Judaism holds that "there is a place in the Kingdom of God for the righteous of all nations." I reasoned that my child, raised

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as a Jew, would be allowed to mature with a healthy respect for his Christian background as representing one of the valid approaches of the human spirit in its search for a realization of God. But my child raised in the narrower mold of Christianity would have been required to negate, invalidate, and repudiate his Jewish background. Judaism offers to his maturing mind the key to unifying his own spirit with a sense of total, not partial worth.

It seems to me that upon these arguments alone could the question be decided. However, it is also vastly important in choosing which religion their child will follow that the parents in a mixed marriage examine—with accompanying soul-searching—the moral, ethical, and cultural concepts of the two religions. So often have I heard it said—both by Christians and by Jews—that Christianity and Judaism differ only on the question of the divinity of Jesus. Nothing could be further from the truth. Different emphases and different interpretations have created from the same Scriptures two entirely different outlooks on life.

For instance, as a Christian I could never understand how God could create such wonderful potentials in life only to want them stifled. It seemed that asceticism and selflessness were always the unapproachable goals. When I first encountered Jewish principles I cannot tell you how eagerly I reached out to the premise that to love life more, is not to love God less. . . .

These, it seems to me, are the important things which Mrs. Felder failed to consider in seeking to decide "My Child: Jew or Christian?" . . . I speak of these things because they were the basis of my own answer to the question "My Child: Jew or Christian?"—an answer in favor of Judaism which is deepened and strengthened with each passing season as I watch my children grow.

MARGARET ABRAMS

Amarillo, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It seems to me that by giving him birth as the child of the two of them, Eleanor Felder and her husband have automatically given their child the answer to "What am I?" Basically, he is a boy child and a human being. Secondarily, he is the son of a father who was raised as a Jew and a mother raised as a Christian, people who in maturity came each to question this childhood training, although they were shaped by it, and who (I assume) fell in love and married each other.

By this act they have already gone outside the "conformity" mores of both religions, more particularly of the Jewish group, which is smaller and more cohesive and more vigorously against intermarriage. . . .

By marrying each other they have already gone "beyond" narrow group boundaries. Now they feel they must go back to them. Why can't their child go on to something new—which it is doing already, whatever artificial "solution" they try to impose on it?

MARJORIE OTTINGER

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

How shall the child of an intermarriage be raised? Eleanor K. Felder has discussed the problem with unusual clarity, emotional balance, and freedom from bias. Yet for all the time she has given to the matter, the expert guidance she has sought, and the amount of reflection she has devoted, she seems to be little closer to a solution than when she started. She and her husband must make a decision, and they don't seem to know what it will be.

Nor is this really surprising. All education is indoctrination—may the pedagogues forgive me! Directly or indirectly, bluntly or subtly, we try to inculcate the attitudes and standards that seem right to us. To do otherwise would be irresponsible. And so, on any matter about which we have convictions, we know very well what to teach our children. Mrs. Felder, I am sure, has clear notions about integrity, respect for the rights of others, and religious bigotry—and has already begun to transmit her attitudes to her little boy.

The question is not whether the child is to be a Christian or a Jew, but what his parents are to be. Religion is not an "elective". . . . Religion is central or it is nothing. If parents believe that religion is important for their child's welfare, then it is important for theirs too. Their hesitations can hardly provide the soil out of which his convictions are to sprout. They can attain what they want for him only by committing themselves.

It is to be regretted that persons so reasonable and so honest did not make up their minds before the child was ever born. They should understand that they cannot safely delay a conclusion. Otherwise, by not making a decision, they will find they have made one—for uncertainty, confusion, and doubt.

(Rabbi) BERNARD J. BAMBERGER

West End Synagogue
New York City

Orthodoxy and Yiddish Culture

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Rabbi de Sola Pool (in his September letter of reply to my article on liberal Judaism, July

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1952) did well to remind us of the non-Ashkenazic Judaism which does not fit into the social and cultural pattern I was describing. I am certainly aware of his historic Spanish-Portuguese Synagogue: as a matter of fact, I was married there. But Sephardic Judaism is not, after all, representative of the mainstream of American Jewish life and it was the mainstream that Mr. Daiches attacked under the undiscriminating name of American Judaism, and that I at least distinguished as *liberal Judaism*.

I am also aware that Orthodox Judaism is not to be equated with Yiddish culture. I tried to point out that it has been so equated by Yiddish Orthodoxy itself, and by those who rejected Yiddish Orthodoxy for liberal Judaism. My aim was to show the error of that equation, and to suggest that Jewish piety remains possible within the new cultural setting of the United States.

In criticizing as "factually indefensible" my generalization that "The American Jews who rejected Orthodoxy were first of all rejecting a slum culture; they were rejecting an immigrant status . . ." Rabbi de Sola Pool must have been thinking again of his congregation, which is Orthodox and yet made up of families who have occupied a proud position in American life for "more than two centuries." Yet the fact that the Jews who did not have a slum culture to reject, did not feel compelled to reject Orthodoxy either, would seem to be a point in favor of my generalization.

ROBERT LANGBAUM

Ithaca, New York

The Small-Town Jew

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Levinger's article in the August issue of COMMENTARY on the disappearance of the small-town Jews in America could apply with almost equal emphasis to the plight of the small-town Jew in Britain. The situation may not be quite so hopeless, as distances between small towns and capital cities are not so great, but the decay is there and nothing that is now being done is likely to stop it.

Dr. Adler, the late Chief Rabbi, was alive to it and had he lived a little longer would have realized something that might have stopped the rot. I spoke with him on numerous occasions about a system of diocesan control as practiced by the Church of England and in a different way by the Free Church Council (Non-Conformist Church). He was impressed by the idea and had actually put it into practice in the North Wales and Lancashire areas. The Reverend Framplon, minister of Princess Road Synagogue in Liverpool, was invited to cooperate and he did. . . .

Bangor is some eighty miles from Liverpool. Reverend Framplon often came over, preached and met the members, and fast and lasting friendships were engendered; the local official had someone with whom to confer, the sermons were enlivened, and the members felt they were part of the larger community.

Since then Bangor has changed, the community has disintegrated, there is no official, there are no services, and the children are allowed to grow up without any knowledge of their faith—there are still as many Jews living in Bangor, but of communal life, there is none. . . .

The spirit of responsibility was certainly greater in those days. I recall with pleasure and pride the frequent visits of Dr. Adler, who described Bangor as "one of the outposts of Jewry"—Reverend Linger, Reverend Green, Dayan Speirs, Rabbi Lipman, Alfred Adler, who preached his first sermon in Bangor, Dr. Daiches, Dr. Buchler, the Honorable Lily Montague and others who took a delight in binding the community together. . . .

Bangor, by the way, is not a village. Its dignitaries would not feel flattered if it was referred to as a small town, although its population is no more than 14,000. It is a university and cathedral city. In its day it has had a Jewish mayor, allied to the Liberal party. Its Jews have had a part—stated to be an important one—in sending Lloyd George to Parliament. . . . Jewish students attend the colleges and Jews come to North Wales for their holidays.

Bangor is one of the places which might have been envisaged by Mr. Levinger when he wrote, "We can hardly be indifferent to their loss."

ISIDORE WARTSKI

Bangor, North Wales
United Kingdom

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Mr. Levinger states that ". . . the small-town Jew is amazingly ignorant of the most elementary Jewish matters—even the dates of the holidays." And he gives examples of Jewish families coming from larger cities within the past few years to introduce some vitality to small-town Jewish life. In the community in which I was raised even the less religious Jews closed their places of business on the High Holidays, and gathered for the community Seder. I recall the experience of Jewish students coming from the East to a small Midwestern college in our community, and attempting to be so obviously ignorant of things Jewish —e.g., attending classes on all the holidays—

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that the townspeople (Gentiles) were astounded and confused. Mr. Levinger states that the soldiers who came to these small communities during the last war had to learn to be tolerant of the provincialism and heathenism there, but it would seem that it is often the city Jew, who is Jewish often in name and monies only, who smacks of heathenism. . . .

Mr. Levinger states further that the "prime factor of the small-town adjustment is the absence of the 'Jewish social group,'" and that when Gentiles "meet no compact body of Jews they are left free to reject or welcome each individual on his own personal merit," and "when a Jew enters politics there, his success or failure seems to be purely a personal matter." Should this not always be the case? It seems that Mr. Levinger is confusing social assimilation, necessary for living in a plural society such as ours, with complete assimilation. . . .

If we need group pressure to retain Judaism and to keep it alive then we need to take stock of what Judaism is and what it believes. Does being Jewish mean identifying ourselves with some twenty-nine different Jewish organizations? . . . Judaism in its totality is rich and complex and will need to be perpetuated in many different ways, but in no case can it be saved by numbers alone.

MRS. LAWRENCE RAPHAEL

Dayton, Ohio

"Naase V'nishmo"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Hecht's "Mr. Big Moves to Greener Pastures" (September) was thoroughly enjoyable. His story of Yiddish life in a small town reminds me of Sholom Aleichem's loving portrayals of the frailties of his fellow Jews.

But, "No matter what you do, somebody's always finding fault." In the story, Mr. Hecht's quotation from the Bible appears as "maase v'nishmo." It is, of course, "naase v'nishmo." I'm sure the error must have been typographical, because *maase* sounds perilously close to *masah*—which means tax—*chas v'chulile.*

MRS. MILTON BIRNBAUM

Springfield, Massachusetts

A Dissent on "My Son John"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Not even my gratitude for the many splendid things COMMENTARY has done can still my feeling of strong dissent from Nathan Glick's review of "My Son John" as "Leo McCarey's Authoritarian Film" (May).

Mr. Glick complains that the picture "lumps into a single heretical amalgam, Communism, liberalism, and secularism." That is not what the film really does, but I do suspect that Mr. Glick is guilty of lumping together into a single authoritarian amalgam, conservatism, patriotism, and religious faith.

True, McCarey does not content himself with the narrow field of post-Yalta Stalinism, but attacks on a much broader front—indeed on a very broad front. He goes so far as to identify the arrogance and vanity of sterile, materialist intellectualism with Communism. And I must confess that I, too, regard Communism as just part of the cycle of "secularist" intellectualism. . . .

It is to be regretted that this film succumbs in its end to typical Hollywood melodrama. But that does not wholly negate its greatness in bringing to the life of the popular screen the true identify of Communism as a form or expression of unrooted intellectualism.

While McCarey, naturally enough for him, uses a Catholic background, I found no insuperable difficulty in substituting a Jewish background and I am sure Protestants would find the process no more difficult. . . .

PHILIP HOCHSTEIN
Editor
Newark *Star-Ledger*

Newark, New Jersey

"Commentary" in the Negev

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I want to open this letter with a very sincere appreciation for your publishing my letter in your June issue. I have since been literally deluged with copies and subscriptions to COMMENTARY. I have in addition received offers of all other types of magazines and in general our literary life here should be greatly enriched. If I am not mistaken either myself personally or the *kvutza* as a unit are supposed to be receiving something like twelve subscriptions to your magazine. This is in addition to the not insubstantial number of people who are sending me their copies after they have read them. . . . I would appreciate it if you could find it within your power to put in a short note from me thanking all the people who have responded so generously to the letter and assuring them that their generosity was very much appreciated. . . .

NECHEMIA MEYERS

Kvutzat Urim
Doar Na, Negev
Israel

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Land of Opportunities

THE NEXT AMERICA: PROPHECY AND FAITH. By LYMAN BRYSON. Harper. 248 pp. $3.50.

Reviewed by DAVID RIESMAN

THIS is an extraordinary book. It takes up the themes of current discourse about America—the growth of large-scale organization, the problem of "mass culture," the supposed slump in leadership, the hue and cry over "values," etc.—and examines them with a lovely freedom from panic and portentousness, a tough-minded patience, a skeptical yet charitable urbanity. It is a book of deceptive simplicity, for Mr. Bryson has a subtle mind but not a subtle style; moreover, since he is addressing a wide as well as a specialist-intellectual audience, he will appear to the latter at times to be needlessly repetitive and slow-paced. For instance, Mr. Bryson writes: ". . . we talk, probably too much, about 'unity.' Democracy has always been institutionalized conflict; it achieves its greatness in tensions. It can encompass any kind of struggle, short of physical violence, as long as all its citizens live by the basic rule of sportsmanship and accept the decisions arrived at by the agreed-on means of competition. And it works, by our definition, in the lives of persons, not in structures, or solidarities, or ideal institutions."

As in the writing of John Dewey, whose views on many matters Mr. Bryson shares and develops, it is easy for the unwary to find platitude in such sentences, but it is more rewarding to find implications that are by no means commonly accepted—in this case, a theory of democracy which regards tension and competition, within individuals and among them, as salubrious; a theory which focuses on processes rather than results; a rare refusal to insist on "agreement on fundamentals" as essential to democratic living. Indeed, Mr. Bryson believes that to insist on ideological consensus as part of the price of cooperation is the sure way to wreck democracy: he is a staunch individualist, believing in conditional cooperation for concrete and limited goals, and hostile to charismatically induced commitments to organization, leader, or nation as such. In a brilliant passage he suggests that many who dutifully sacrifice a talent to a cause may do so out of "fear of testing the true strength of the talent. . . ."

Mr. Bryson is of course aware of the recent work in the social sciences which has tended to "dissolve" the individual, on the one hand, into his social conditionings as a child, and on the other, into his social roles as an adult, but he never makes the mistake of assuming that the individual, because he has his genesis in society and makes use of society to exist as a human being, is burdened on that account with an unredeemable mortgage to the past and to his fellows. He insists, as strongly as does Erich Fromm, on man's being "for himself."

He differs markedly, however, from most intellectuals, including Fromm, in the benignity and sanguinity of his evaluation of American work, leisure, and politics. For he is convinced that, with economic abundance virtually achieved, we have entered an era of distribution (as against production) in which the development of our cultural life becomes the opportunity and hence the task of the Americans. Thus he sees little chance for individual development in the great collectives, whether of business, labor, or government, that garner and divide the national take; instead he sees the cultural area—the arts and sciences of high and low degrees—as the new frontier. And even now, he argues, we Americans have made much more progress in the development of individual taste, talent, and sheer pleasure in multiplicity of choice on that frontier than we give ourselves credit for. He courageously defends public high schools, so facilely made scapegoats for all our social crudities, as the mediators of popular taste, for he believes the schools are doing remarkably well in their unprecedented job not only of diffusing cultural products but also of democratizing cultural productivity—he has the faith of Hughes Mearns in the possibilities of teaching individual self-expression in the arts. He offers us the vision, already partly realized, of a Next America that has turned over its economic and,

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save in the local community, its political routines to large organization without vain regret, and which has become the first society to make cultural inventiveness and participation both the right and duty of everyone.

Mr. Bryson freely concedes that the taste of the liberated majority is and will be vulgar, like the beach at Coney Island. Vulgarity holds no lure for him; but neither does it appall him: he thinks that most men have always been vulgar (though their vulgarity was hidden under the conventions of hierarchically imposed taste), and that to disdain the vulgar is to disdain mankind. He looks for American greatness, not in empire or in the subtler imperialism of an elite culture protected (T. S. Eliot fashion) from the temptations of vulgarity, but in the quality of individual living, each to his own bent.

But he is wise enough to know that, if the choices of ordinary men are to be productive for them, they need to be challenged by the models offered by the lives and works of extraordinary men; hence he is concerned to show, contrary to what is often thought, that popular vulgarity and mechanically distributed cultural objects are not obstacles to the further development of high culture. He declares: "Our principle is that good things in music, like good things in drama, or literature, or anything else that depends on a quality of enjoyment, make their own case with the normal person. There must not be a taskmaster . . . bringing men and the arts together. Responsiveness is natural. . . ."

In rightly taking a stand against superficial critics of "mass culture" and in being aware of the enormous leaps recently made by millions in their musical interest and grasp, Mr. Bryson is on solid ground. But it seems to me he does not fully meet the kind of argument brought forward by many high-culture partisans who view with a jaundiced eye the speed of diffusion of good taste, for instance Clement Greenberg, in a *Horizon* (1947) article on American art and culture, or T. W. Adorno in his critiques of radio music. Adorno, no mere snob, thinks that a symphony over the air is inevitably distorted by fragmented and eroded context both in mass transmission and parlor reception. Greenberg insists (his argument is rather too complex for brief paraphrase) that a high art which must constantly face invasion from the middlebrow hordes who suffer from "culture-sickness" cannot prosper; it will lack a time of maturation; it will lack discriminating, unsentimental critics. But instead of going into detail concerning such relations, subtle and often covert, as exist between American high and middlebrow culture, Mr. Bryson is at pains to deal with a simpler historical problem and to show that previous cultural epochs where an elite culture confronted only a folk culture—epochs which now attract the fearful and nostalgic—have been glamorized and misunderstood: that, for instance, the peasants whose unerring taste and craftsmanship now seem so appealing were actually hamstrung in any inventiveness or flexibility, their supposed good taste ready to collapse at the first opportunity to acquire factory-made shoddiness. (He might have added that the European upper strata who look with horror on American taste are actually being forced by American power and wealth to confront the taste of their own exported lower strata—a taste that is perhaps refined just as often as made still more vulgar by the American experience.) While all this makes good sense and good reading, it does not add up to a sustained treatment of the role of the creative artist and thinker in a culture which confronts him with the historically novel danger of a suddenly proliferating audience of millions, at once tempting and fearsome. To take one instance, it does not deal quite searchingly enough with the very real problems of the novelist whose credit with a wide audience—perhaps from a book on the failure of the hero's success—exposes him to contempt from the ingroup for whose opinions he most cares and from which he hopes to learn more about his craft.

Very likely, this expects too much of a book like *The Next America*, whose plurality of aims matches the cultural pluralism it espouses. Mr. Bryson is more satisfactory when he deals with the danger that schools of art, writing, drama, dance, and so on will tempt their pupils to seek careers rather than amateur enjoyment of their small and usually unsaleable talents. As a CBS executive, he is agonizingly aware of the way in which the media have driven out most provincial performance for profit: a few movie and network stars can entertain a whole nation, and no little-theater movement will do much to decentralize performance. No harm in that, Mr. Bryson believes, any more than in other forms of mass production, so long as the young are not gulled into equating paid performance with self-nourishing artistic activity; but he sees the commercial ambitions of the talent school as combining with parental and adolescent ambition to lead to enormous frustration. For the same de-

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"An excellent picture of Joseph Stalin, the Man in the Kremlin, and a first rate introduction to the nature of life in present day Soviet society and the problems arising for our own country from Stalin's domestic system and the foreign policy that springs from it."
—BERTRAM D. WOLFE, *N.Y. Herald Tribune Book Review*

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velopments which have made Americans culture-conscious in recent decades have pushed many young people into supposedly non-commercial careers in which the very notion of having a career is itself a disguised commercialism, and in which a talent is not felt as rewarding unless others reward it. Mr. Bryson hopes that, as Americans become increasingly bored with material success, they will begin to look to culture less as a possible career and more as a private resource, though one publicly facilitated by expenditures on libraries, museums, adult education, studios, and similar tools.

ANOTHER reviewer, or this reviewer on another day, might select quite different themes from *The Next America* for comment—might, for instance, treat all the trenchant things Mr. Bryson has to say about philosophies of history (including the sharpest critiques of Toynbee's ethics I have seen), or about world government, or about labor leaders. The book itself, like Mr. Bryson's radio program, is an "Invitation to Learning." Listeners to that program will be prepared for Mr. Bryson's wit, generosity, and cultivation, but perhaps not for his sharpness and originality. If they compare that program with such analogues as the University of Chicago "Round Table of the Air," they may find, as I do, some basis for faith in Mr. Bryson's hopes for a culture-minded rather than a political-minded or work-minded America. The "Round Table" usually debates the great issues of politics: what shall we do about Indonesia, or inflation, or civil rights. By contrast, "Invitation to Learning" assumes, as does *The Next America,* that it is more interesting to discuss interpretation of literature and history, and that with good luck and good management we can afford to. The addicts of fanaticism and political partisanship have behind them a tradition of piety towards the politically crucial and important, whereas Mr. Bryson looks forward to an era of good feeling in which civilized men, with only a weather eye out for their political and economic freedom, will spend their passions and energies in learning and art, in genial talk and casual enjoyment, all to the greater glory of nobody but themselves. No historicist, he grants that that era may never come—he is fully aware of the threats from within and without—but in his quiet way he has furnished an admirable balance sheet of the gains and costs that living in this Next America would mean. I would be glad to settle for it, and in it.

Latest Hemingway and Steinbeck

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA. By ERNEST HEMINGWAY. Scribner. 140 pp. $3.00.
EAST OF EDEN. By JOHN STEINBECK. Viking. 602 pp. $4.50.

Reviewed by PHILIP RAHV

HEMINGWAY'S new story happily demonstrates his recovery from the distemper that so plainly marked his last novel, *Across the River and into the Trees.* The artist in him appears to have regained control, curbing the over-assertive ego which sometimes declines into a kind of morbid irritability of self-love mixed with self-pity. It is to be hoped that the recovery is more than temporary and that it will stand him in good stead in the completion of the long work he is reported to have embarked on some years ago.

But free as this latest work is of the faults of the preceding one, it is still by no means the masterpiece which the nationwide publicity set off by its publication in *Life* magazine has made it out to be. Publicity is the reward as well as the nemesis of celebrities, but it has nothing in common with judgment. Though the merit of this new story is incontestable, so are its limitations. I do not believe that it will eventually be placed among Hemingway's major writings.

Moreover, it is in no sense a novel, as the publishers would have us believe. At its core it is actually little more than a fishing anecdote, though one invested with a heroic appeal by the writer's art, which here again confirms its natural affinity with the theme of combat and virile sports. This art is at its best in the supple and exact rendering of the sensory detail called for by its chosen theme; and in telling of the old fisherman's ordeal on the open sea—of his strenuous encounter with a giant marlin, the capture of him after a two-day struggle, and the loss of the carcass to the sharks in the end—Hemingway makes the most of his gifts, fulfilling his imaginative intention of showing us "the real thing, the sequence of motion and fact which made the emotion," and turning to good account the values of courage and endurance and discipline in action on which his ethic as an artist depends.

The premise of the story—its moral premise at any rate—is in the purity and goodness and bravery of Santiago, the Cuban fisherman. And given Hemingway's habitual attitude of tough-

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ness coupled with sentimentality, one can easily make out the chief threat to the integrity of the writing; and it is in fact to the circumvention of sentimentality that the story owes its success. The two scenes (in which the boy displays his adoration of Santiago) that are not quite exempt from the charge of sentimentality are but indirectly related to the action. They form a lyrical prelude and postlude to the action, which is presented in fictional terms that are hard and clear. And it is saved from false sentiment, I think, by Hemingway's wonderful feeling for the sea and its creatures—a feeling that he is able to objectify with as much care and devotion as he lavishes on the old man. This creates the rare effect of our perceiving the old man and the fish he catches as if they existed, like a savage and his totem, within the same psychic continuum. No wonder that at the height of his battle with the fish Santiago exclaims: "You are killing me, fish. . . . But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who."

When all this has been said, however, one is still left with the impression that the creative appeal of this narrative is forceful yet restricted, its quality of emotion genuine but so elemental in its totality as to exact nothing from us beyond instant assent. It exhibits the credentials of the authentic, but in itself it promises very little by way of an advance beyond the positions already won in the earlier phases of Hemingway's career. To be sure, if one is to judge by what some of the reviewers have been saying and by the talk heard among literary people, the meaning of *The Old Man and the Sea* is to be sought in its profound symbolism. It may be that the symbolism is really there, though I for one have been unable to locate it. I suspect that here again the characteristic attempt of the present literary period is being made to overcome the reality of the felt experience of art by converting it to some moral or spiritual platitude. It goes without saying that the platitude is invariably sublimated through the newly modish terms of myth and symbolism. As Lionel Trilling reported in a recent essay, students have now acquired "a trick of speaking of money in Dostoevsky's novels as 'symbolic,' as if no one ever needed, or spent, or gambled, or squandered the stuff—and as if to think of it as an actuality were sub-literary." Perhaps this latter-day tendency accounts for some of the inflationary readings that Hemingway's story has received, readings that typically stress some kind of schematism of spirit at the expense of the action so lucidly represented in its pages. Hemingway's big marlin is no Moby Dick, and his fisherman is not Captain Ahab nor was meant to be. It is enough praise to say that their existence is real, and that their encounter is described in a language, at once relaxed and disciplined, which is a source of pleasure. In art, as Wallace Stevens once put it, "Description is revelation. It is not/ The thing described, nor false facsimile." And to the ingenious interpreters I would suggest to look to the denotations of a work of literature before taking off into the empyrean of pure connotation.

In John Steinbeck's novel, on the other hand, we get "false facsimile" in a very large dose. His book is a family chronicle of immense length and pretension in which the conviction of the actual is almost entirely lacking. The sensational violence and evil it continually precipitates cease to arouse our concern once we become aware of the sheerly manipulative will laboring to overwhelm us. At the same time one is persuaded that this manipulative will is in a state of helpless ignorance of its own nature: which explains

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how it can play along so smoothly with the all too evident sincerity of this novelist—the strangling sincerity of an uninteresting mind.

East of Eden is the story of two generations of the Hamilton family and three of the Trask family, more particularly of Adam Trask, his twin sons, and their "errant mother," as the book jacket describes her with singular understatement. But consider the enormous load of evil which Cathy Trask—the "errant mother" so-called—is made to carry. The list of misdeeds that follows is incomplete, but this woman is guilty, among other things, of trapping her parents in a locked house and setting fire to it with homicidal results; of committing adultery on her wedding night and, later, of shooting her husband with gratuitous ill will and deserting her infant sons in order to enter a brothel of which she eventually becomes the proprietor through the simple expedient of poisoning the owner. Cathy is so prodigiously without conscience in her wickedness that compared to her Dostoevsky's Raskolnikov, who murders two women with an ax, is a small-time delinquent needlessly fussing. The author of *Crime and Punishment* defined his story as the "psychological account of a crime." Steinbeck, on his part, makes no effort to motivate Cathy's crimes psychologically or otherwise, resting content with the bald statement that the same process which produces physical monsters might also produce mental or psychic ones. This is a very lazy idea for a novelist, for it lets him off much too easily. With this reduction of the mental to the physical as his justification, he is no longer under obligation to impose any sort of order on experience but can rely on the weird contingencies of raw life for his effects. But life, as the old saying goes, is stranger than fiction, and Steinbeck ignores this fact at the cost of total incoherence. Cathy Trask belongs in a freak show. She cannot be assimilated to the organized structure of meanings that a novel must be if it is seriously to solicit our attention. As it is, *East of Eden* mixes the automatic violence of a pulp writer like Mickey Spillane with the sense of evil, stylized in the extreme, now enjoying a vogue in literature unequaled since the period of the decay of the Elizabethan drama. Steinbeck's novel can be said to mark the *reductio ad absurdum* of the trend.

This novel contains other elements, obviously designed to force a contrast between good and evil. But on the whole the character images of goodness and humane wisdom it projects are quite as arbitrary as its images of total depravity; and the literary idiom in which these images are tossed to and fro through six hundred long pages induces a terrible weariness. It is a language animated by an energy more mechanical than creative, conveying an innate cheeriness that surely belies the assumption of meanings deep and tragic. Steinbeck, the author of some fine short stories and *The Grapes of Wrath* of course—a monumental documentary, if not a satisfactory work of the imagination, which admittedly did some good in its day—was never the major talent that the mass media of reviewing and book publicity have taken him to be. This latest production will least sustain the high claims made for him.

The Philosophers' Hidden Truth

PERSECUTION AND THE ART OF WRITING. By LEO STRAUSS. The Free Press. Glencoe, Illinois. 204 pp. $4.00.

Reviewed by IRVING KRISTOL

"BUT this much I can say about all those who have written and will write saying that they *know* the nature of the subject which is my most serious interest . . . in my opinion it is impossible for any of these people to know anything about the matter. For there is *no* treatise of mine on these things nor will there ever be. . . ." So wrote Plato in his *Seventh Letter*, and the import of his words is stunning. Is there really *no* treatise by him on that which is his "most serious interest"? What, then, are we to make of his *Dialogues*, which fill so many volumes and are regarded as the original source of Western philosophy?

It is to the answering of this question, and not only with regard to Plato but also as it affects all pre-Enlightenment thinkers of significance, that Professor Leo Strauss—distinguished occupant of the Charles Merriam chair of political science at the University of Chicago and guest professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary's Institute on Theology—is devoting himself. It is his thesis that few, if any, of the Great Books in philosophy and political philosophy written before the French Revolution inaugurated the era of journalism can simply be "read," no matter how vigorously the student (or the instructor) is exhorted to do so and no matter how earnestly he applies himself. They have to be studied, and in a special way;

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for if they are truly great, it is probably their intention to conceal as well as to reveal, and they do not yield their secrets easily. In other words, the Great Books contain, besides their exoteric teachings as piously summarized in textbooks, esoteric doctrines reserved only for the most intelligent and perceptive. It must be admitted that this sounds rather preposterous—but only until one has read Professor Strauss, after which it appears astonishingly plausible.

THE reason why these books were written this way is twofold, and pertains, on the one hand, to the relation of the philosopher to the ruling powers of his age, on the other, to his relation to the mass of men who were ruled.

The philosopher's relation to the ruling powers of his age, before the emergence of a secular, liberal society, made it the part of wisdom for him to be exceedingly discreet on all matters pertaining to state or church, lest he experience the royal hospitality of the dungeon or the ecclesiastical favor of the stake. This is a situation which, in the totalitarian societies of our own day, is becoming increasingly familiar to us; and Professor Strauss indicates how a philosopher may operate under such conditions:

"We can easily imagine that a historian living in a totalitarian country, a generally respected and unsuspected member of the only party in existence, might be led by his investigations to doubt the soundness of the government-sponsored interpretation of the history of religion. Nobody would prevent him from publishing a passionate attack on what he would call the liberal view. He would of course have to state the liberal view before attacking it; he would make that statement in the quiet, unspectacular, and somewhat boring manner which would seem natural; he would use many technical terms, give many quotations and attach undue importance to insignificant details. . . . Only when he reached the core of the argument would he write three or four sentences in that terse and lively style which is apt to arrest the attention of young men who love to think. . . . His reasonable young reader would for the first time catch a glimpse of the forbidden fruit. The attack, the bulk of the book, would consist of virulent expansions of the most virulent utterances in the holy book or books of the ruling party."

This sort of thing is rather self-evident once it is pointed out; even if there are inevitable

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disagreements over particular cases—for instance, whether or not Descartes' incorporation of the Deity in his philosophic system was a stratagem—it may still be conceded that we cannot always take at face value the words of a writer who lived, or lives, under a despotism.

What is far from self-evident, and this is at the heart of Professor Strauss's argument, is that, in the ages preceding the Enlightenment, the serious thinker freely and deliberately—as an act of "social responsibility," as it were—so censored his own writings that they would mislead the frivolous reader, the "common man." In those times, the man of learning had cautious, when not downright pessimistic, views about the possibility and desirability of popular education. For him, the abyss between the "wise" and the "vulgar" was an inescapable fact of human nature, and he assumed that there are truths that no decent man should pronounce in public because of their unsettling effect on the social order. Consequently, he set out quite deliberately to deceive the majority of his readers.

It would be an error to regard this practice as but the expression of aristocratic prejudice. This point of view is not even necessarily opposed to democracy (though it is definitely opposed to democratic, or liberal, ideologies); Spinoza, who was a democrat in politics, wrote *ad captum vulgi*—"according to the capacity of the vulgar." Nor is it irreconcilable with the reforming spirit, as we see in the case of Montesquieu who, in the words of d'Alembert, "having often to present important truths whose direct and explicit statement might be injurious and without benefit, had the prudence to disguise them; and, by this innocent artifice, hid them from those who might be harmed, without their being lost to the wise." Indeed, the thinker who acted thus could and did plead a genuine, benevolent concern for humanity: popular opinions had to be accepted in order that the unenlightened might be slowly moved toward an approximation of the truth, in the measure that they could tolerate it.

Obviously, all this implies some basic premises about the connection between philosophy and life—premises which Professor Strauss is not too shy to affirm, though he has not yet, in his written work, tried to establish them by argument. One premise is that reason is unalterably critical of, and opposed to, revelation; the philosopher cannot accept the supernatural *fiat*, but must explain all phenomena by "the nature of things." Another premise is that no civil order can be stable or enduring unless it is founded on a common assent to a revealed religion; for society needs a code of morality, and reason (that is, philosophy) cannot provide any such specific code, any detailed spiritually coercive index of rights and wrongs. Reason, by its very essence unable to supply any categorical imperatives for the life of action, can only lay down general rules which are minimum requirements for a tolerable social existence—and one of these requirements is a "revealed" moral code such as reason itself cannot provide. A third premise is that philosophy itself, before modern times, assumes the superiority of the contemplative life of the individual to the practical life of the crowd, but it also takes it for granted that most men are not capable of ascending from the cave of the commonplace to the sunlight of the *vita contemplativa*, and therefore have need for a practical guidance that only revelation can give them.

So it is that, while philosophy is abstractly opposed to revelation, yet philosophers must support it. That this is what philosophers have thought and done, is the recurrent theme of Professor Strauss's essays.

But this deception by the philosophers would be self-defeating if it were known and talked about. It must be kept secret, except from a few disciples and potential disciples who can, in their turn, be trusted to dissimulate expertly. How this is accomplished Professor Strauss discovers in his investigation of "the art of writing," an investigation which is really an exercise in the art of reading. Does a close scrutiny of the Platonic dialogues discover that they are conversations between a superior man (usually Socrates) and one or more inferior men? And is it not also to be noted that even where two philosophers are present, they do not talk to one another? That, for Professor Strauss, is a significant clue to the effect that Socrates' opinions are not identical with his speech, that the conversational setting of each dialogue, and of every statement within each dialogue, must be taken into account if we would know what Socrates *really* believed. Such a textual analysis will disclose how Socrates managed *the* key problem of philosophy, namely the relation between philosophy (the realm of theoretical truth) and politics (the realm of practical moral guidance), which is necessarily complex, obscure, and dangerous.

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PROFESSOR STRAUSS came upon this problem in his studies of medieval Jewish and Islamic thought, which—in distinction from Christian thought of the time—put a greater stress on the importance of political philosophy for the whole of philosophy. For Jews and Moslems, what was revealed was not Faith but Law, no creed or dogma but a comprehensive order of social life. Whereas in Christianity sacred doctrine was theological, and philosophy was needed for its study, in Judaism and Islam sacred doctrine was legal in character and philosophy was inherently subversive of it, for it interposed a question mark in the path of full and instant obedience. The Talmud recognized this fact when it said flatly: "He who reflects about four things—about what is above, what is below, what is before, what is behind—it would be better for him not to have come into the world." Philosophy, then, in the Jewish and Moslem worlds was forced to develop that discretion which it had in classical antiquity, and which Professor Strauss regards as its true mark of authenticity. It is not without interest that he has never thought it worth his while to write a single essay on a Christian thinker, preferring to limit himself to the Greeks, the medieval Jews and Moslems, and the secular moderns (Hobbes, Rousseau, etc.); and one cannot but suspect that for Professor Strauss, Christianity is an irresponsible and unstable mixture of doctrines.

THE bulk of *Persecution and the Art of Writing* is devoted to three long essays on "the art of reading" Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed,* Judah Halevi's *Kuzari,* and Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus.* All three previously appeared in Jewish scholarly publications, and have made a deep impression on Professor Strauss's fellow experts. They are so closely reasoned, so brilliant in their analysis of details of style and argument, that it is impossible fairly to summarize them. Nevertheless, in order to have a glimpse of Professor Strauss at work, it might be worthwhile here to give some abbreviated and simplified illustrations of his method, adapted from his essay on Maimonides.

What is the subject matter of the *Guide for the Perplexed?* When we try to answer this simple question, we run up against a paradox. On the one hand, Maimonides states that his book is a defense of Judaism against philosophy, which for him meant Aristotelianism; he expressly states that he is not writing a philosophical book, and that he has excluded all of physics and most of metaphysics from his purview. On the other hand, he gives as his intention the explanation of various Biblical words, behind whose literal meaning there hides a secret meaning; and the highest secrets of the Bible, again according to Maimonides, are *ma'aseh bereshit* (the Talmudic phrase for physics—literally, the "story of the beginning") and *ma'aseh merkabah* (the Talmudic phrase for metaphysics—literally, the "story of the chariot" in Ezekiel).

It is possible, to be sure, that Maimonides was merely confused. It is also possible, however, that the confusion is not accidental. In favor of this latter alternative are two explicit statements of Maimonides, in one of which he warns the reader that "the diction of this treatise has not been chosen by haphazard," and in the other of which he says that "you will not demand from me here anything except chapter headings, and even those headings are, in this treatise, not arranged according to any sequence whatsoever, but they are scattered and intermingled with other subjects the explanation of which is intended." The reference to "chapter headings" is a significant hint that the *Guide* is a philo-

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sophical book, after all; for the Talmud prohibits the teaching of *ma'aseh merkabah* (metaphysics) to more than one disciple, who must show promise of wisdom, and even then allows the teaching of only the "chapter headings." This hint is reinforced by the fact that the *Guide* is written in the form of letters to a favorite pupil, one Joseph.

Professor Strauss resolves the paradox by showing that the purpose of the *Guide* is to reveal the *identity* of the philosophy of Aristotle with the secrets of the Bible, and that Maimonides' "defense" of the Law against philosophy takes the form of proving that the "secret teaching" of the Law, from which the Commandments are derived and by which they can be justified, is exactly the same as the teaching of Aristotle. Thus, for Maimonides the Bible is an esoteric book, and the disorder of his *Guide* is a polished reflection of the intentional disorder of Scripture, whose "revealed" truths are but popular and imaginative expressions of rational truths as these were demonstrated by Aristotle.

To make one's way through the disorder of the *Guide,* one has to imitate Maimonides' way through the disorder of Scripture. That is, one has to read the *Guide* as Maimonides read the Bible, which is the way that Orthodox Jews have always read these "books"—realizing that any word has in it a world of meaning and that the composition as a whole is a vast and mysterious web of meaning. Every detail in the *Guide* is important. When Maimonides "quotes" some classifications of the Commandments, or some enumerations of opinions concerning providence or creation, which he had previously made in his codification of the Law, the *Mishneh Torah,* it may be found upon close examination that the quotation is inaccurate in a slight but significant way. Similarly, the first word of every chapter must be related to the first words of the preceding and succeeding chapters, to see if a (or rather, what kind of) pattern is being suggested. Particular attention must also be paid to contradictory statements, even if, or rather especially when, one is repeated assertively many times and the other is tossed off but once, in a casual way; when Maimonides repeatedly insists upon the necessity of observing the entire Law, and then at one point, in a few passing words, denies the obligatory character of the whole sacrificial legislation—that is no minor matter!

The fruitfulness of this procedure may be gathered from the following instances which Professor Strauss gives of Maimonides' "art of writing":

(1) On four occasions, and each time with approval, Maimonides quotes an expression of Aristotle to the effect that the sense of touch is a disgrace to us. But two words are omitted from Aristotle's original expression which, in its complete text, asserts that the sense of touch is *popularly considered* a disgrace. The instructed reader, who knew his Aristotle, would recognize that Maimonides was here uttering a conventional opinion, one that prized supersensual truths—i.e. "revelations"—over the truths of experience and reason. And this reader would observe, if he read closely, that there are other passages in the *Guide* which deny that there is any difference in dignity between the senses or that supersensual truths are possible. He would also be considerably provoked by the fact that one of these misquotations from Aristotle is contained in a passage that gives Maimonides' general definition of prophecy, and that this definition of prophecy is given in a *conditional* sentence, whose grammatical nature is obscured by its being very long and by its containing a lengthy parenthesis.

(2) Maimonides vigorously declares that the immortality of the soul and the bodily resurrection of the dead are cardinal principles of Jewish faith. But when, in the *Guide,* he takes up the question of whether there is a Divine Providence and tries to answer the philosophical objections to it, he makes no use of either of these principles which are so crucial to the religious point of view. In contrast, elsewhere in the *Guide* he interprets the phrase in Deuteronomy 8:16, "The good at thy latter end," to mean merely the fortitude acquired by the Jews from their desert wanderings. The sagacious reader would also notice that the problem of divine justice is discussed after Maimonides has completed his discourse on physics and metaphysics, and he would infer that for the author this was not a subject for theoretical knowledge but a practical matter, i.e., it had to do with morals and government, with "political philosophy."

(3) The potential sage will be struck by Maimonides' use of the first person plural and singular. When the author defends "our" opinion (i.e., the opinion of the community of believers in the Law) against the philosophers, he expresses conventional beliefs. When he

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says "my" opinion, he is pointing to his secret teaching. The fact that he calls the *Mishneh Torah* "our great book," and the *Guide* "my treatise," is his way of distinguishing between his exoteric and esoteric writings. Indeed, this was understood by one of the medieval commentators on Maimonides, who interpreted the quotation from Proverbs 22:17 at the beginning of the *Guide* to read: "Bow down thine ear, and hearken to the words of the sages, [but] apply thine heart unto mine opinion."

IT MUST be emphasized that the above is only a superficial and coarsened version of an essay on the *Guide* that is fifty-seven pages long, and whose argument requires a special effort by the reader in order to be followed. Professor Strauss writes in a bold and masculine style; his sentences are unambiguous; his paragraphs are lucid; but his reasoning is so close and subtle that one often finds that the thread has been lost. In this respect, reading Professor Strauss is not too different an experience from reading Maimonides.

No doubt, there will be scholars who will respectfully dispute Professor Strauss on just about every point. They will find, as many already know, that he is a most formidable opponent. And if in time the victory goes to Professor Strauss, he will have accomplished nothing less than a revolution in intellectual history, and most of us will—figuratively, at least—have to go back to school to learn the wisdom of the past that we thought we knew. It is fortunate for us that the lessons will be rather more exciting, and more daring in their implications, than we remember them. And it is a consolation of sorts to know in advance that, for those of us who fail to learn this art of reading, provision has been made.

Germany's "Mistakes"

FLIGHT IN THE WINTER. By JÜRGEN THORWALD. Pantheon. 317 pp. $3.75.
DANCE OF DEATH. By ERICH KERN. Scribner. 256 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by L. POLIAKOV

AS IN every other country, there has been in Germany a flood of books dealing with the past war. These two examples tell us much of the ways in which Germans are seeking to "re-evaluate" their recent history.

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Flight in the Winter, a well-written product of considerable research, offers a general picture of the German collapse in the East during the final period of the war; it narrates the military developments and describes in detail the hardships endured by the civil population fleeing before the Russian advance. The military questions do not primarily concern us here; suffice it to say that the author treats his subject in black and white: the Nazis (including the Nazi generals) are invariably bad and cowardly; the non-Nazi generals (including Guderian) are just as invariably tragic victims of their "duty." On the sufferings of the German refugees from the East—a subject one might naturally expect to be dear to the heart of the German reader—Mr. Thorwald applies himself to harrowing the nerves of his readers, expending his greatest descriptive talents on the mass rapes of German women by Russian soldiers. It is incontestable that rape was at that time systematically practiced by a considerable proportion of the Red Army, but what concerns us here is the manner in which the author distributes his colors—as if the outrages committed upon German women were the chief atrocities of the war. Again, when Mr. Thorwald speaks of French prisoners of war, it is only to tell us of "French war prisoners who died defending German women and children," or else were simply killed by the Russians; not a word to indicate that for the hundreds of thousands of French prisoners of war, after five years of captivity, the arrival of the Russians was a joyous signal of liberation, and little else. All through his book Mr. Thorwald attempts to convince his readers that the sufferings endured by the German population as a result of Russian barbarism during the last phase of the war remain without parallel in history; most of us will have little difficulty in thinking of a parallel—and more than a parallel—that Mr. Thorwald apparently wishes us to forget.

It remains true that *Flight in the Winter* supplies some interesting information on the conduct of a Russian army under certain conditions. And let me quote to the credit of the author the following reflection, which he attributes to one of his witnesses (still in connection with rape): "The reports I heard in those final days sound so incredible that most likely they will not be believed in more peaceful times. They are still human beings who do such things—who find an incomprehensible pleasure in raping the same woman over and over, dozens of times, even while other women are standing near. . . . I was in Poland in 1939, when the Russians moved in, and I did not see a single woman molested. This shows the frightful power of propaganda. [Similarly] Goebbels planted in the masses of our soldiers the notion that the Russians were Bolshevist subhumans, [and] that notion was drilled into them until many of them believed it. How else could German soldiers have stood by in 1941, while Russian prisoners of war literally died like flies, by the ten thousands!"

THE dust jacket of *Dance of Death* informs us, with a not quite disarming candor, that Erich Kern "was and is today a loyal Nazi." Mr. Kern's book, a series of personal recollections of the war interspersed with comments of some philosophical pretension, exhibits in a greater degree all the elements of bias and bad faith that are to be discerned in *Flight in the Winter*. What Mr. Kern saw and experienced in Russia and elsewhere is undoubtedly very interesting; what he remembers and relates of these experiences can be summarized fairly accurately as follows:

1. Hitler's armies were received by the Russian people with indescribable enthusiasm, for these armies were liberating them from a detested bondage. Any exceptions whatever to this attitude must be attributed to the mysterious Russian soul: ". . . the Russians have always been subject to quite different laws from other people"; "To the Russians, everything is religion, even atheism"; "This is Russia . . . houses on fire, [but] God is more important." This "Russian soul" is equally responsible with "Bolshevik culture" for the "inhuman atrocities" committed by the Red Army and Soviet partisans. Nevertheless, the Russian people, for all their "Russian soul," were ready to be liberated: ". . . in the fatal year 1941 . . . Stalin faced political bankruptcy. His laboratory had been prised open and smashed and his propaganda become ineffectual and patently absurd."

2. "Yet this picture had changed, through our fault, and our fault alone," continues the author. Elsewhere he develops this idea, speaking of the "disastrous mistakes which Germany committed in her handling of the Russian people, the mass executions, the deportations, and the oppressive administration." Germany, by antagonizing the people of the occupied territories, "did not grasp the great opportunity that

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was given in the East." Let us note that it is here no longer a matter of "inhuman atrocities," but simply of "mistakes"; it is an inhuman atrocity to murder a German, but an error of public relations to murder a Russian. The Fuehrer himself, "despite his mistakes, which we will probably never acknowledge as our own, was actually a personification of the German people." And finally, "these mistakes have long been paid for and overshadowed by the torture and death of millions of defenseless German men, women, and children in any territory which has come under the rule of the Red Star. . . ."

It would perhaps be of little use to concern oneself with this naive logic if there was not some danger that such a book as Mr. Kern's might help to popularize in America a simplified view of a problem that is extremely important and extremely complex: to what degree can the Stalinist regime rely on the loyalty of the Russians? The archives of the Nazi party and the Wehrmacht captured by the Allied armies would offer a less encouraging response to this question than Mr. Kern's; it is to be regretted that the significant information which can be drawn from those archives has for the most part not been made public. And even that information must be taken with some reservations, for it applies only to the territories actually occupied by the Germans, which is to say, mainly, the Ukraine; moreover, the German invasion came only a few years after the brutalities of the forced collectivization. Likewise, a distinction must be maintained between the reports of Nazi functionaries and those of the Wehrmacht, these latter being a good deal more reserved about the "enthusiasm" of the Russian population on the arrival of the German "liberators." Continued misrepresentation on this whole question will only encourage very dangerous illusions.

The Limits of Law

EQUALITY BY STATUTE—LEGAL CONTROLS OVER GROUP DISCRIMINATION. By MORROE BERGER. With a foreword by Robert M. MacIver. Columbia University Press. 238 pp. $3.25.

Reviewed by CHARLES ABRAMS

THE author, a frequent contributor to COMMENTARY and an able sociologist, embodies his

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faith in "law" as a cure for inequality in this book, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee. With FEPC a burning issue in the current campaign, the book should please those Negro and civil rights groups to whom law is the great spearhead to equality, for it promises a great deal.

Law, Dr. Berger says, not only can eliminate group discrimination but can modify human behavior, codify our ideals, help minorities defend themselves and advance their welfare, and "help establish those fundamental conditions of social life which encourage free association of all groups on a level of equality and which discourage prejudicial attitudes. . . ."

Five chapters, fortified by five hundred footnotes and a preface by Robert M. MacIver, are aligned in support of the thesis; one chapter discusses civil rights today and during the Reconstruction Period; two outline the Supreme Court's rulings on civil rights from 1868 to 1950; another summarizes the operation of the New York State Law Against Discrimination, while the final chapter sums up the argument and conclusions.

The book is timely, contains much interesting material, and is clearly written, but its fault—and it is a dangerous fault—is that it attempts to resolve a critical issue on incomplete and often contradictory evidence.

The author, for example, states that between 1937 and 1950 minorities made important gains, yet concedes Congress enacted no major law dealing with minority rights during that period. He has great faith in FEPC and cites some evidence of progress by the New York State Committee Against Discrimination, but then admits there have been few complaints filed, and that some of the agency's best friends have been critical. He shows that between 1868 and 1937 the bulk of the Supreme Court's decisions were against the Negro, yet the Negro made considerable progress in that time. Contrariwise, though two of the high court's most favorable decisions have been in housing, it is in housing that some of the greatest setbacks have been suffered. The gains achieved in public housing have not come through anti-discrimination laws or court decisions but through social programs secured without benefit of either.

The trouble with the author's position is that by focusing upon law he plays down other vital aids—administrative policies, economic advancement, executive orders, and general social legislation, to name a few.

In the field of housing, for example, the author asserts that "Law can eliminate the conditions that set groups apart and can encourage those that bring them together." Yet it is primarily more housing, not more law, that can eliminate housing discrimination. So, too, a firm non-discrimination policy by the Federal Housing Administration would have done more for the Negro than a dozen anti-discrimination laws. A full employment program is more helpful than an FEPC, helpful as the latter might be.

THOSE who choose law as the battering ram for driving through to equality might well be cautioned against the rebound, for law can be dangerous as well as useful:

Law can be a subterfuge—witness the anti-discrimination rider attached to the Housing Act of 1949 by Senators Cain and Bricker to defeat public housing, a federal program which did more to demonstrate the practicability of non-discriminatory living than any other anti-discrimination statute enacted. The Lobby Committee Reports now disclose that the amendment was conceived as a ruse by the real estate lobby. Yet the NAACP was induced to support it. An anti-discrimination amendment also killed the aid-to-education bill in 1943.

Law can be distracting. All too often, civic groups pressing for laws that can have little practical effect, thereby divert interest from areas where real gains might be achieved.

Law can be oppressive—witness the roster of laws designed for "improving health," "protecting safety," or "enacted for the minority's own good," that actually wound up as instruments for curbing Chinese, Japanese, Negroes, and other minorities.

Law can be unreasonable. Imposing on strictly private prerogatives, it might arouse the community against the minority and lose ground laboriously gained through the years. No divining rod exists, for example, for determining when the right to live where one chooses conflicts with the right to live with whom one chooses. Should a law banning discrimination in hotels and furnished rooms embrace two-family houses? Whether law should be used to check private prerogatives depends not on law being good *per se* but on whether the particular field to be controlled is affected with a public interest; whether the exercise of freedom by some has brought oppression upon others; whether public morality has been shocked by unreasonable private action; whether necessities

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This *I Believe*

by Spinoza*

"IN A DEMOCRACY everyone submits to the control of authority over his actions, but not over his judgment and reason. What shall be accepted as true or rejected as false, or what opinions should actuate men in their worship of God, are questions falling within a man's natural right, which he cannot abdicate even with his own consent.

"Government which attempts to control minds is tyrannical. What greater misfortune for a state can be conceived than that honorable men should be sent like criminals into exile because they hold diverse opinions which they cannot disguise?

"When people try to take away liberty of thought, and bring to trial the opinions of mankind, they only succeed in surrounding their victims with an appearance of martyrdom and raise the feelings of pity and revenge rather than of terror. He that knows himself to be upright shrinks from no punishment; he holds that death in a good cause is an honor, and that death for freedom is glory.

"The ultimate aim of government is not to rule by fear, but to free every man from fear, that he may live in all possible security; in other words, to strengthen his natural right to exist and work without injury to himself or others. The object of government is not to change men into puppets, but to enable them to develop their minds and bodies in security, and to employ their reason unshackled. In fact, the true aim of government is liberty."

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The Jewish Newsletter

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of life are unjustly withheld from the free market; whether the people are ready for the change; whether the law will pass constitutional test.

Law can be premature. Lacking proper support, it may set unfavorable precedents in the courts that cannot be easily rectified. All too often groups strike forth with a bill or a test suit before the judges or the public are ready for them. One unfavorable decision then starts a chain of precedents that become firmly embedded as "the law" and set back progress for decades.

In short, law is one instrument but not the only instrument for achieving progress.

MACIVER's preface says: "No law should require men to change their attitudes, but most laws require something that is contrary to the attitudes of some groups of men, *whether large or small.*" Dr. Berger echoes this by adding that "laws can be enacted in response to the demands of a small minority, or without the knowledge of the majority." He quotes Arnold Rose to the effect that discrimination can be reduced by "authoritative order," and cites Rose's references to the Soviet Union's "effectiveness" in curbing anti-Semitism. This strikes me as cynicism; our major effort should be to keep the majority attached to the basic ethic of our society, and not to impose the will of a scant or legal majority. The right to equality is created not out of law or decree alone but out of natural rights, tradition, administrative rulings, legislative findings, executive pronouncements, fundamental charters such as the Constitution or the UN Charter, the emerging ethic of legal decisions, and the whole combination of factors we call public policy.

These are some of the points that trouble me; and I hope the author, who has attempted to maneuver in an area abounding with pitfalls, forgives the writer for highlighting the traps. It is only by frank realistic criticism and by focusing on all the facts, all the issues, and all the dangers, that a path toward the goal of equality for all men may be safely made.

BOOK REVIEWERS IN THIS ISSUE

DAVID RIESMAN, professor of social sciences at the University of Chicago, is the author of *The Lonely Crowd,* a study of American society, culture, and personality, and *Faces in the Crowd,* published this year by Yale.

PHILIP RAHV is an editor of *Partisan Review.* A volume of his critical essays, *Image and Idea,* appeared in 1949.

IRVING KRISTOL, former managing editor of COMMENTARY, is executive secretary of the American Committee for Cultural Freedom.

L. POLIAKOV is on the staff of the Centre de Documentation Juive Contemporaine in Paris. His book *Bréviare de la Haine* (Paris, 1951) is considered by many to be the most comprehensive and authoritative work yet published on the history of the Jewish experience in Hitler's Europe.

CHARLES ABRAMS, a widely known expert on housing and community planning, has contributed numerous articles to COMMENTARY on those subjects, especially in their bearing on inter-group relations in this country.

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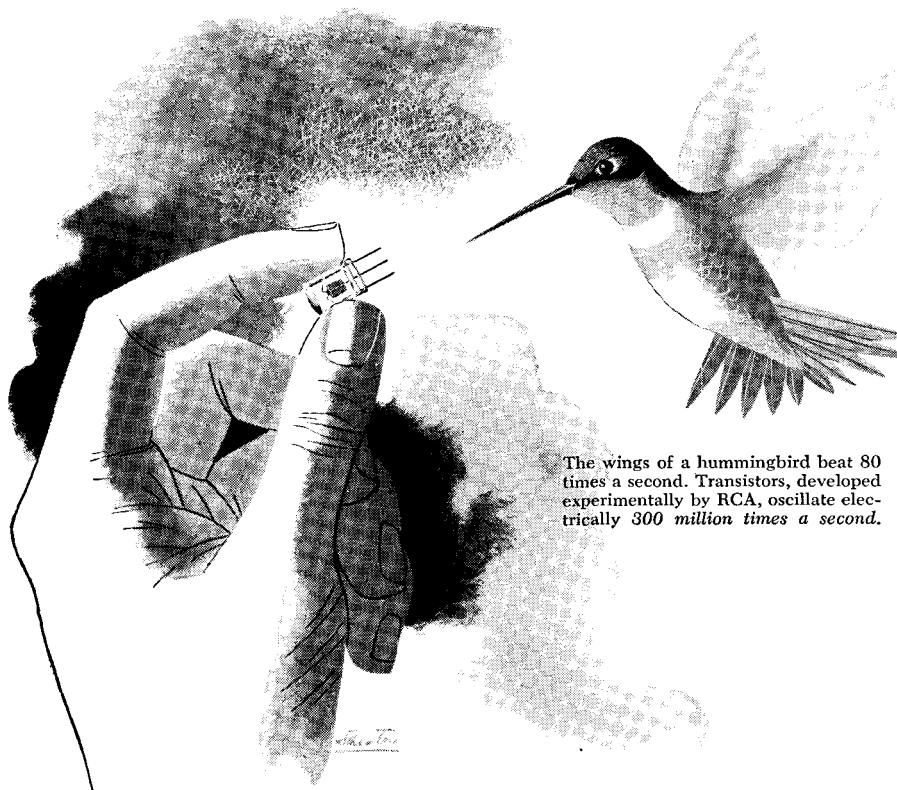

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